new masses

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WHICH WAY FOR PROGRESSIVES?

by A. B. Magil

FRANCE TODAY by Ilya Ehrenburg

BEHOLD THE LAND! by W. E. B. Du Bois

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just a minute

THE other day several writers were sitting in our cubby, discussing the status of the honest writer under capitalism. When the subject of the American Authors Authority came up, one of the group referred to a recent piece in *The Screen Writer*, organ of the Screen Writers' Guild. "The article," said this writer, "properly points out that a writer's work ceases to be legally his after twenty-seven years, unless he reapplies for the copyright, after which it is good for twenty-seven years more. Then it becomes public domain—that is, anybody can use it without paying a dime in royalties. Compare that with an industrial or realty property. The original owner may be dead for 500 years but it still remains in the family, if there is one, and no one can touch it. Or take the owner of a mechanical invention. The heirs and assigns of the technicolor inventor, for instance, draw down the sugar long after they have forgotten that the inventor ever lived."

Several days later we received a note from Milt Blau, one of the writers present:

"Regarding our talk, I've looked up the piece in *The Screen Writer*. The authors, Howard Dimsdale and Guy Endore, have a wonderful suggestion for putting that institution 'Public Domain' to work for the benefit of the writer, after all. The plan goes somewhat as follows: Pro Bono Zilch decides to do a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. He likes Shakespeare because he doesn't have to pay any dough for script rights. Quite a saving. But is there any reason why a private citizen should profit from what is meant to serve the public interest? In theory, public domain means that the public may enjoy the classics without cost. With that there can be no quarrel. Let amateur groups, school drama societies, July Fourth and Christmas pageants pick freely from the public culture stocks. But Pro Bono Zilch is another matter. Why should the public donate to him what he expects to make a profit from, because of a legal technicality?

"They suggest that Pro Bono and his like be taxed by the state, that he pay a royalty for the use of the classics as he would for any work by a contemporary author. Such a move would serve a double purpose. To begin with, the private entrepreneur would not run to the classic or to the public domain merely to save money, and thus cut down the market possibilities of the living writer. In the second place, the money gained by the state through such a tax could be used to finance a fine arts program. The departed writers would be happy to know that their works were helping to finance living ones (alleged professional jealousy notwithstanding). Such a move would stop the current argument among politicians that a fine arts program is a luxury that we cannot at present afford. The more I think of this proposal," says Milt, "the sounder it seems. Let's begin to beat the drum for it."

I agree with Milt; the idea is a honey. Everybody would benefit. It would not cost theater-goers any more than it does now to attend a play in the public domain (how could admission prices possibly go higher?) and they would have the satisfaction of knowing that they are creating the means, in a painless way, of providing outlets for our authors, playwrights, musicians, etc.

A fine arts program is a "must" for our country. With the chaotic conditions that exist in the commercial fields of culture, even worse if possible than in other industries (nothing can equal the fantastic working conditions of the Hollywood writer), a fine arts government bureau and program is the only means of insuring our writers and artists any guarantee of subsistence. When an economic crisis hits, the first ones to go down are the cultural workers.

By way of illustrating the plight of the artist, John Sloan, the painter, tells a little story. During the last depression a small businessman, broke and homeless, discovered a fairly clean cellar to sleep in. In the morning, to his amazement, he discovered about a dozen people writing, painting and playing musical instruments. "When did all you people get here?" he asked.

"Hell," replied one of them, "we've been here for years."

As Milt Blau says, let's start beating that drum.

J. F.

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Reveille for Progressives A. B. Magil 3

France Revisited Ilya Ehrenburg 7

The Last Day: a short story William Glynne-Jones 10

Flashbacks and Coming Attractions Joseph Foster 14

Portside Patter Bill Richards 15

Behold the Land! W. E. B. DuBois 18

The Seekers: a poem Thomas McGrath 20

Mail Call 21

Book Reviews: Metamorphosis, by Franz Kafka: S. Finkelstein; European Witness, by Stephen Spender: Derek Kartun; Bright Day, by J. B. Priestley: Robert Friedman; A Star Pointed North, by Edmund Fuller: Lloyd L. Brown; The Art of Russia, by Helen Rubissow: Walter McElroy; City in the Sun, by Karon Kehoe: Charles Dwoskin 22

Theater Isidor Schneider 29

Films Joseph Foster 30

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REVEILLE FOR PROGRESSIVES

Out of the merger of two groups a movement is born "that is destined to grow in the fight to free America from the predatory trusts."

By A. B. MAGIL

THEY had a little trouble naming the new infant born of the union of the National Citizens Political Action Committee and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. The joint national convention of the two groups was moving rapidly to a close when a California delegate asked that the name previously voted, Independent Citizens for Political Action, be reconsidered on the ground that it would create difficulties in many parts of the country. The procedure was perhaps not entirely in accordance with Mr. Roberts' famous rules, but what happened during the next few minutes was thoroughly expressive of the democratic character of this convention. The question of the name was once more thrown open for discussion, new proposals came from every part of the hall, and when the votes were in, the choice had fallen on Progressive Citizens of America.

It is not, however, by its name that the new organization will be judged, but by its work. It starts with auspicious parentage: NCPAC and ICC, both founded in the campaign that won a fourth term for Franklin D. Roosevelt, have served the progressive cause well. Both have functioned largely among middle-class people, the ICC as a membership organization, the NCPAC for the most part through committees. Both have attracted to them leaders of liberal thought in the arts, sciences, professions and in public service throughout the country.

In the new-born unity of these two groups is the first answer to the Republican victory of November 5. It is a unity forged in the spirit of that counterattack which Henry A. Wallace urged on all progressives in his speech at the convention. This unity is a symbol and a signpost. True, because of the similarity in aims and activities, it was relatively easy for these two organizations to combine forces. But obstacles, nevertheless, had to be overcome, and the fusion could not have been achieved if the mood of despair and retreat which infected many liberals after the election—and for that matter, before November 5 too—had been allowed to dominate either of the two groups. And the strength of the new PCA is more than the sum of the separate strengths of the merging groups: the joint convention itself attracted representation from a number of unaffiliated independent voters' organizations from Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, New Hampshire and New Jersey. The decisions of the convention, too, including the choice of a name, were directed toward reaching the great masses of the American people who have not yet found progressive leadership. "We seek to enlist millions of people in year-round action on national, state and local issues," declares the preamble of PCA's program. ". . . We intend to expand our organization into new areas, to interlock with existing progressive labor, farm, women's, veterans', youth, religious and minority groups, and to build community political organizations which can challenge reaction's machines on their home ground."

SOMETHING new has also been added to this first counterthrust to reaction's victory. At the Conference of Progressives, which I attended in Chicago at the end of September, no mention was made in any public declaration of the possibility of a new party. Though many delegates favored working toward such a party, it was recognized that nationally they were still a minority, and to commit the conference to that objective would alienate those who either still believed the progressives within the Democratic Party could capture and transform that organization or for other reasons were not yet ready to project a break with the traditional two-party system.

William Gropper.

Some people regarded this exclusion of the third-party question as fixed and unalterable for a long time to come. "The liberals," wrote Harold Laski in the *Nation* of November 23, "rule out also any serious possibility of a third party. . . . American progressive opinion is firmly convinced that the best it can do is to bring all the pressure to bear it can in support of liberal influences in the Democratic Party." And Freda Kirchwey wrote in the December 7 *Nation*: ". . . progressives in and out of organized labor tend to be skeptic about the chances of a third party. Men like Wallace and Ickes, whatever their mutual differences, and in spite of their break with the administration, agree in wanting to work through the Democratic Party."

It is therefore all the more significant that when NCPAC and ICC, two of the three organizations that initiated the Conference of Progressives (the other was the CIO Political Action Committee), became a single entity they found it necessary less than two months after the election to approach the "third party" question in a new way. The preamble of the convention program states: "The Democratic Party has repeatedly served the progressive cause. But today the Democratic Party is notoriously tainted by Jim Crow reaction and machine greed. It is not clear now whether this party will recover its progressive tradition or surrender to its own brand of ig-

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norance and bigotry. We want to be clear on one thing. If the Democratic Party woos privilege and betrays the people, it will die and deserve to die. We cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility of a new political party, whose fidelity to our goals can be relied upon. We, the people, will not wait forever—we will not wait long for the Democratic Party to make its choice."

This does three things: it adopts a highly critical attitude toward the Democratic Party (after having earlier excluded the Republican Party from all claim to liberal support); it opens the door to the eventuality that a new party may become necessary; it serves notice on the Democratic Party that there is a time limit on the wait-and-see attitude, that unless it "makes good" very soon, the people will take the path of a new party. This statement continues to maintain the unity of those who favor and those who oppose a new party, but it is a unity at a higher stage in which both groups are moving, however conditionally in the case of one of them, toward a break with the present two-party set-up.

If it is argued that the Progressive Citizens of America represents the more advanced forces within the movement for independent political action and is therefore not fully representative of that movement as a whole, it should be noted, first, that its vice-chairmen include those who, like Miss Kirchwey, Carey McWilliams and Philip Murray, have hitherto been decidedly cool toward the new party idea, and second, that the new approach to this question was also evident in the speech of the man who is the leader of the progressives in the Democratic Party, Henry Wallace. For the first time Wallace also intimated that a break with both old parties may become necessary. "We have less use," he said, "for a conservative, high-tariff Democratic Party than we have for a reactionary, high-tariff Republican Party. If need be we shall first fight one and then the other."

THE launching of PCA helps bring into focus a number of problems that concern the further development of independent progressivism. In the first place, can PCA constitute potentially the whole of this movement and can it, when conditions are ripe, transform itself into a new people's political party? In my opinion it cannot. It has an indispensable job to do, but it would be a mistake to believe that PCA can replace or render superfluous the independent political activity of organized labor. I don't know whether PCA intends to seek substantial membership among workers, but even if it does, this cannot substitute for the participation and leadership of the labor movement as such. In our country particularly there are many illusions that middle-class liberals can be both the brains and body of a broad people's movement capable of effectively challenging reaction and eventually winning power. This illusion helped shipwreck the third-party movements of the past and if allowed to gain ascendance can have no happier results in the future. I think Harold Laski was completely right when he wrote: "Those . . . who want a political party which can give to the United States the opportunity of showing its readiness, both domestically and internationally, for great experiments have got to build one on a new foundation. They have got to make organized labor the core of a progressive alliance round which can gather all who have realized the danger of a retreat from the plane to which Mr. Roosevelt had raised the issues he had to meet." (*Nation*, November 23.)

To base this movement on the middle classes, whether of city or countryside, is to base it on quicksand. For the middle classes are by their position as fragments and splinters of the dominant capitalist forces condemned to the instability, incohesiveness, and isolation from the nerve-centers of production that render them incapable of providing consistently progressive leadership, though individuals among them may and do transcend these class limitations. It is only the working class, which because of its numbers and its decisive role in production represents a potential power, that can challenge the power of big business. And the trade unions have the virtue of organizing the workers as a *class* and setting them in motion against the enemy they have in common with the urban and rural middle classes.

On the other hand, it is equally true that labor alone, without the support of large sections of the working farmers, small businessmen, professionals, and the Negro people, cannot build an effective people's political coalition. Side by side with middle-class illusions there has also existed in the progressive movement a narrow "labor" approach to political activity (this too reflects the pressure of capitalist ideas), with only nominal gestures toward enlisting farmers, middle-class people and white-collar workers in common struggle. The swing of middle-class and white-collar voters to the Republicans in the recent election and the continued GOP ascendance among the farmers highlight the strategic importance of working seriously among these groups and of elaborating a program in which they will find answers to their own, not simply labor's, problems.

THIS brings us to a second question: the relative unreadiness of the labor movement for the leading role it must play in welding together the political coalition that can become—and should become by 1948—a new anti-fascist, anti-monopoly people's party. One factor in this is that in our country the political consciousness of the workers as a whole and of their organized detachments is still at a comparatively low level. Even in the CIO there is hesitation to develop the full implications of PAC and to take the initiative in striking out on new paths, away from the accustomed treadmill of Democratic-Republican politics. Another factor is the division in the labor movement, with the AFL hierarchy not only hostile toward independent political action, but showing decided Republican leanings.

However, it seems to me that neither of these two aspects of labor's unreadiness is static and unalterable. The axe now being sharpened by the GOP and the tory Democrats for use against progressive legislation and the people's living standards is bound to sharpen the consciousness of millions of workers concerning the political imperatives before them provided the new PCA, CIO-PAC, the Conference of Progressives, the Communist Party and other independent forces are on the job. As a result of reactionary attacks the pressure for joint or parallel action of AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhood unions will also increase. And the coming depression will greatly accelerate this whole process. I believe that the Progressive Citizens of America can do much to prod all this along by establishing its own close ties with the labor movement. In this way it can influence unions and

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leaders toward more active participation in the independent political movement and in various communities can help build a bridge between AFL and CIO. The inclusion of CIO President Philip Murray and A. F. Whitney, head of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, among the vice-chairmen of PCA is a good omen—let's hope they find an AFL man to join them.

Finally, the organization of PCA, coming only shortly before a conference in Washington of what aspires to be a competing movement under the Red-baiting aegis of the Union for Democratic Action, highlights the problem of the relations between Communists and non-Communists in the progressive movement. Max Lerner criticizes both organizations with an even hand. The Union for Democratic Action, he writes (*PM*, December 31), has allowed the issues of Communism and Russia "to become almost obsessive." On the other hand, he regrets that PCA "did not use its chance, in a fresh start, to take a clearly independent position. Its statement in its constitution that it relies on the method of the ballot is a statement from which even Communists would not publicly dissent today. I should have been eager to see a more vigorous statement rejecting the single-party system and the police-state."

It is evident that Lerner has a curious conception of independence. By the definition implicit in his argument independence consists in taking stands from which Communists would publicly dissent. The logic of this definition, which Lerner himself would of course not pursue to the bitter end, is that the acme of independence can be achieved by adopting the views of Rankin and Hearst. Moreover, Lerner seems to see some virtue in dissension between Communists and non-Communists in a progressive organization. However, in the same issue of *PM* there is a story on the PCA convention by John K. Weiss which states:

"The top personalities behind the PCA convention were heartened by the complete amity among the delegates on the question of American Communists and the Soviet Union. Differing points of view on this issue certainly existed in the minds of the three hundred delegates who met in New York as representatives of twenty-one state groups from Rhode Island to California.

"More significant than these differences, however, was the fact that all three hundred delegates—without a single exception—were willing to bury whatever partisan views they held in the interests of unity of the entire convention. The familiar 'right-left' quibbling was totally absent."

As to Lerner's specific suggestion, it seems to me he has gone pretty far afield in the search for questions on which Communists would split with non-Communist progressives. The one-party system is no issue in the United States, and since there are plenty of real issues for the progressive movement to deal with, there is no need to invent any. As for the police-state, in the sense in which this term is generally used, for Americans it can only mean a struggle against the Rankins, the J. Edgar Hoovers and the more ominous consequences that might flow from the GOP victory. But the Communists not only don't dissent from this; they are most active in organizing precisely this kind of a struggle. Or do I misread Lerner's meaning? Can it be that he is suggesting that an American progressive group tell the people of Russia that they must not have a one-party system? Why stop at that? Why not tell the other European countries that they must not have a multi-party system since America has discovered that democratic vir-

William Gropper.

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tue lies in having only two parties? And can Lerner be suggesting that the hateful term police-state, which is associated with the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini, be applied to the people's state of the Soviet Union? That would be adding insult to falsehood.

No, I'm afraid there are no fruits to be gathered along the road of Red-baiting, whether "obsessive" or "moderate," except those with a decidedly bitter taste. One can be critical of Communists, as Communists are critical of other progressives, and still see that the two can and must work together if reaction is to be defeated. The convention that gave birth to the Progressive Citizens of America had the good sense to spell out unity with something more than five letters of the alphabet. It is only a beginning and the toughest part of the battle for a new political alignment and a new party still lies ahead. But this is a movement that is destined to grow, to be nourished on the fight to free America from the predatory trusts that ride herd over our people. And in this fight the bonds that tie so many to faith in the capitalist "promise" will loosen and the socialist truth will take root in the minds of millions.

THIS FIGHT CAN BE WON

"If ever there was a time when American progressives must act, it is now."

The following is the text of the preamble to the program adopted by the delegates to the first national convention of the Progressive Citizens of America, New York City, Dec. 29, 1946.

WE AMERICANS have reached the end of an era. A new epoch of danger and promise has begun.

War in the past has been hideous and costly. It was limited enough to permit the race to survive. War in the future will be total in range and exact an unpayable cost. The fight for peace is clearly the fight for life. Our generation must make that fight—and win it.

Economic depression has in the past been hideous and costly. It was limited enough to be tolerable and tolerated. Depression in the future will be total. It will crucify a nation. If it occurs, it will tear our country apart in civil conflict, and strike the world prostrate in the shadow of our own defeat. The fight for full employment is clearly a fight for life. Our generation must make that fight—and win it.

Repression of men's freedom in the past has been hideous and a crime. It has occurred because the claims of freedom were not strong enough to remake the world. Repression of freedom in the future will meet unprecedented resistance, world-wide and violent, and inspired by ringing words from Magna Carta to the Atlantic Charter. The fight for universal freedom is clearly a fight for life. Our generation must make that fight—and win it.

We believe this fight can be won. We believe that peace, well-being and freedom can be made secure. But we assert bluntly that the fight will be bitter. Its outcome is not assured. Upon its outcome depends our survival. At this moment of unprecedented crisis, our government has fallen to men of shocking bigotry and striking ignorance. They are disposed to place our destiny in the hands of men dominated by the same stupid arrogance that brought the nation to its knees fifteen years ago. These men have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. They are eager to do it again. These spokesmen of monopoly would sacrifice the welfare of the many to the power of the few—that is a perfect formula for disaster.

Our government has fallen to men whose world vision is caught within a new isolationism. They view the world not as a brotherhood of peoples but as an economic pie to be divided among cartels. This is a recipe for international anarchy and ultimate ruin.

These convictions have led us to form this organization for political action. Our aims can be simply stated. We seek unity among progressives. We seek to combat political apathy, which is reaction's weapon. We seek to enlist millions of people in year-round action on national, state and local issues.

We begin this organization with state and community committees. We intend to expand our organization into new areas, to interlock with existing progressive labor, farm, women's, veterans', youth, religious and minority groups, and to build community political organizations which can challenge reaction's machines on their home ground.

As this organization is firmly built, it will determine in real democratic fashion the course it will take. It is apparent for all to see that the Republican Party has long since lost any possible claim as a liberal party. The Democratic Party has repeatedly served the progressive cause. But today the Democratic Party is notoriously tainted by Jim Crow reaction and machine greed. It is not clear now whether this party will recover its progressive tradition or surrender to its own brand of ignorance and bigotry. We want to be clear on one thing. If the Democratic Party woos privilege and betrays the people, it will die and deserve to die. We cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility of a new political party, whose fidelity to our goals can be relied upon. We, the people, will not wait forever—we will not wait long for the Democratic Party to make its choice.

If ever there was a time when American progressives must act, it is now. They must sharply state the problems we face. They must daringly proclaim the goals we pursue. They must extend unceasingly the public understanding of those problems and goals. They must prove that those goals will be attained, or we shall pay a brutal cost: fascism at home and war throughout the world. They must wholeheartedly try to win all progressive Americans to a common army in the fight for life.

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FRANCE REVISITED

The fruits of change in the nation's life are ripening throughout the countryside.

By ILYA EHRENBURG

MANY of the foreign journalists who visited France this past summer presumed to say that the French, like the Bourbons in their time, had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. They were the journalists who usually spend their time in fashionable restaurants, and are on a familiar footing with saloon bar-tenders.

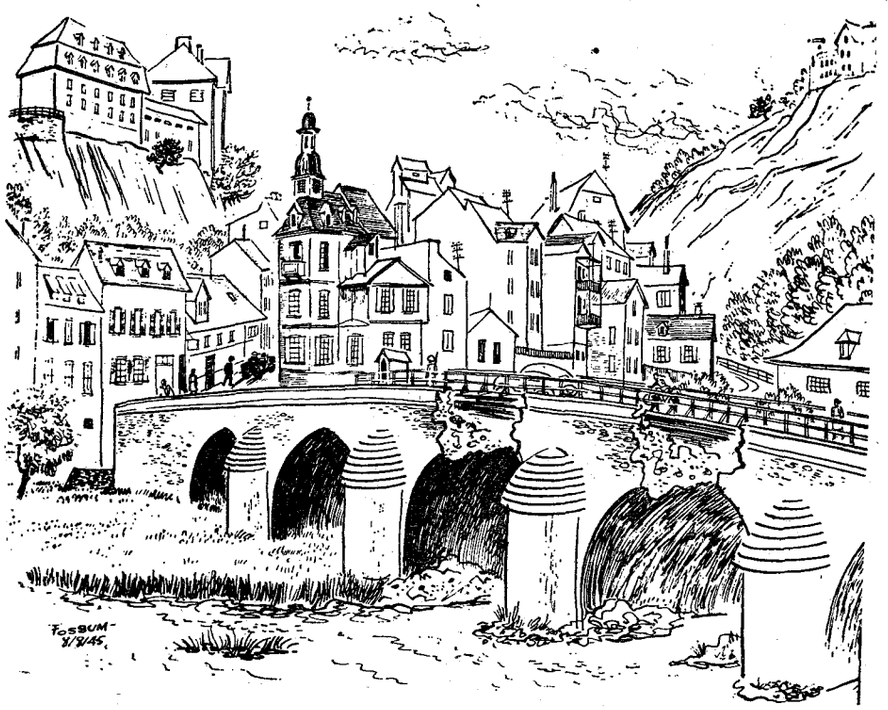
I saw France after six years' absence, and it was apparent to me that a great deal had changed—less than the French patriots thirsted for, more than the alien trustees desired.

On this visit I missed many of my old friends—they had been killed by the fascists. But I met some people I would have preferred not to meet. Yesterday the lackeys of the occupation authorities, they have now acquired documents testifying to their ardent patriotism.

There are many stuffy corners in France. Flandin acquitted, Daladier and Reynaud permitted to participate in political life—and those who supplied the Germans with wine, silk, aluminum and slaves are allowed to represent themselves as the saviors of their country.

During the occupation the Germans appointed Prof. Bertrand mayor of Lyons. When the city was freed he was arrested, but soon afterwards released. The university formed a committee to make enquiries about students who had laid aside their books to take up arms with the Partisans during the occupation. What must have been the astonishment of the former Partisans when they saw the professor listed as a member of the committee!

To a point that is beyond all decency, many newspapers still resemble those that continued to appear during the occupation. Who, turning the pages of *Monde,* does not realize that he is looking at *Le Temps?* And who does not recognize *Paris-soir* in *France-soir?* The journalists who compromised themselves write today under pen names. But the industrialists have no need of this subterfuge.



Syd Fossum.

I spent a fortnight at Rochefort-sur-Loire, a small town in a wine-growing district. The mayor, a vintner and landowner in a big way, was the same man who had held the post under the Germans. The peasants rented from him, and were afraid to anger him. Many such mayors are to be found in France. They are the pillars of reaction, the hope of the Vatican, the army of what is called "Western civilization."

It is not very far from the department of Maine-et-Loire to that of Haute-Vienne, only about 200 miles; yet to go from one to the other is like entering another country and another age. In Haute-Vienne an armed struggle was carried on against the occupation forces. There are no traitors living in Haute-Vienne — the Partisans killed them during the war. In Maine-et-Loire gold was the reward of treachery; in Haute-Vienne—lead.

THE country is impoverished. In districts where people used to rinse out the glasses with wine when they were reluctant to go for water, the very taste of wine is forgotten. Parisians dreaded the winter, for there is no coal. The deep wounds in the body of France are not yet healed.

Recovery proceeds much more slowly than many of the French, remembering past history, had hoped. The wounds proved deeper than had been thought—I am speaking now of moral injuries. The occupation perverted many souls. It was inseparably connected with speculation, and one of its legacies is the black market.

A generation without professional training has grown up. Class egoism is delaying recovery. One would think that the capitalists, before anyone, would be interested in recovery. But they are in no hurry. They are afraid of the strengthening of democracy, and prefer to sacrifice their regular dividends for the sake of their future. They do not want to lose everything tomorrow for the sake of a trifle today. They are staking on desolation, unemployment, beggary.

The bourgeois, that is certain, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The center of the city of Tours is in ruins. The architects made plans

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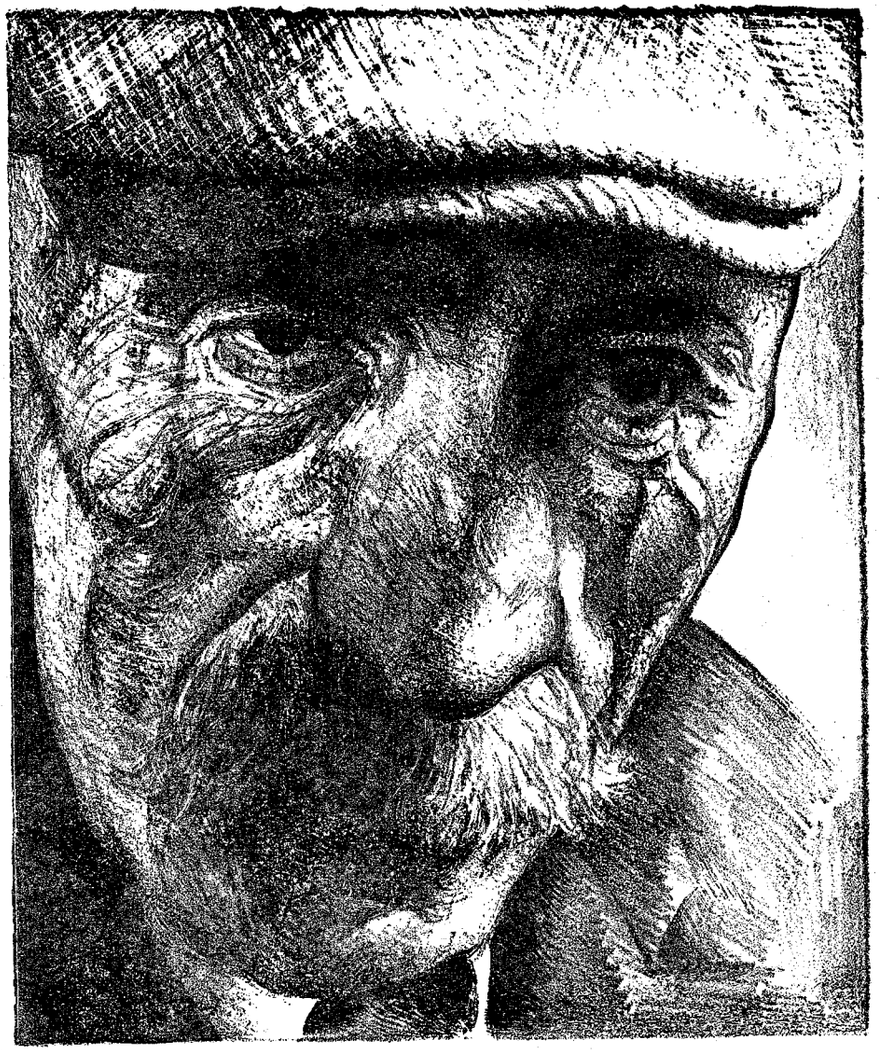
to rebuild it, but the shopowners were afraid that the center might be moved, and started a campaign against the plan. They covered the walls of the city with highly emotional appeals, such as: "Tours is threatened by a second catastrophe."

It goes without saying that in France the German fascists conducted themselves otherwise than in the East. At first the hangmen wore white gloves, and represented themselves as courteous trustees. They were interested in preserving order in France. The country was allowed to live, and live very tolerably, on condition that she ceased to be France. Thus was the conscience of individuals and of classes tested. For some the occupation meant blood, tears, the loss of kindred, fear and heroism. For others it meant profits. Those who say "no" to democracy today found a soft enough "yes" for the Germans.

In Angers I visited the Cointreau liqueur firm. M. Cointreau told me he could not complain of the occupation. "They appreciated our liqueurs," he said. His huge copper vats were not touched, though the Germans needed metal. "They appreciated our liqueurs. . . ."

In Paris the monument to Voltaire was taken away and melted down. But Voltaire, after all, is not M. Cointreau. You cannot do business with him. You get nothing from him except, perhaps, posthumous irony.



M. J. Kallem.

STRONG as is the Communist Party in France, there are only two Communist prefects—in the Loire and in Haute-Vienne. By their works one may know them. Saint-Etienne and Limoges are towns where postwar industry got on its feet sooner than in others.

There are a number of cities with Communist municipal organs, among them Rheims, Toulon and Nantes. Communists play an important part in the municipal life of many large towns. Hundreds of small towns and villages are under Communist administration.

The country sees that the Communists can do more than criticize. They can work, and revive industry, transport and agriculture. When Limousin peasants were introduced to a Communist prefect at an agricultural show, they were struck by his business-like approach and knowledge of breeds of cattle. The new class has demonstrated that it knows not only how to fight for its country, but also how to organize and administer. It has shown itself resourceful and capable.

There are at present in France only two large organizations with real power over millions — the Communist Party and the Catholic Church. The bourgeoisie, that once prided itself on its Voltairean free-thinking, has become pious in its old age. It began with Descartes, and ends with incense. This accounts for the fact that the Church is growing markedly stronger.

Churchgoers now number not only those who love God but also those who do not love the Communists. The stronger the influence of the Communist Party in any district, the more fervent the genuflections of the local bourgeoisie. Before the war there were radicals who combined free-thinking with devotion to the existing order. Today the *curé* and the *sans-culottes* confront each other as they did a hundred and fifty years ago.

When I say that much has changed in France, I am thinking in the first place of the rural districts. A considerable proportion of the peasantry has changed its opinions, and that is the most favorable result of the tragedy through which France has passed.

Some people say that the peasants enriched themselves during the occupation. It is true that they have more money today than they used to have, but money has fallen in value. The peasants have not become richer, nor are they impoverished. Their growth has been spiritual, and the wall that isolated them from the world is down.

They made the acquaintance of Communists for the first time in those departments where Partisans were fighting. They gave shelter to the Partisans. And listening to the fervent words of their worker, teacher and student guests, they acquired a different outlook.

In departments where there were no Partisans, the peasants are still apt

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to see events through the eyes of the parish priest, to believe the reactionary papers and fear the Communists. Sometimes a single village is split into two camps. I visited one such village—Vouvray. The Left list at the municipal elections won by a majority of several votes.

I talked with one of the rich peasants, Lalois, who had lived very well in the Germans' time. "The Communists aren't peasants," he complained. "They're newcomers. My wealth was accumulated by the sweat of three generations."

In the same village I met a young woman whose name was Bedoir. She was a candidate for the Constituent Assembly. She is the daughter of a vintner, she works in the vineyards, and knows a great deal about literature. She married a Parisian worker who has now become a vintner. He is the son of a Communist and the grandson of a Communard.

In the Bedoir home I observed how the country had merged with the town. But I am not thinking of the Bedoir couple alone. There has been an upheaval in the consciousness of millions of peasants.

Marcel Cachin, the Communist leader, happened to be visiting the village of Eymoutier when I passed through. "When I spoke here forty years ago," he said, "only three people came to the meeting. Today there must have been about 2,000."

I saw many villages in Haute-Vienne where nearly all the peasants voted Communist. That is how they voted in Correze, in the Dordogne and many other departments.

The artist Lurcat, a Communist, bought the ruins of a medieval tower in the Dordogne, intending to fix it up as a studio for himself. The peasants still speak of the owners of chateaux, even ruined chateaux, as "chatelains." And so when Lurcat settled in the village the mayor greeted him with: "It's a very good thing you've come to live with us, comrade chatelain, because we are just going to organize a Communist Party cell here."

To appreciate this story one must remember the past of France. In June, 1848, and also during the Commune, the bourgeoisie stabbed the *blousards* to death with bayonets wielded by peasants. The shadow of the reactionary village that hated the "city idlers" hung over the proletriat. Now the village has split, and a good half of the peasants are on the workers' side.

In the summer of 1939 I spent a fortnight in Julienat, a village near Macon noted for its wine. There I made the acquaintance of two Communist vintners. One of them, Augias, was young. The other, Alphonse Baudry, was in his sixties.

One afternoon, when Baudry was treating me to some wonderful wine, he remarked: "I suppose the wine in the Moscow district is better than this." I explained that we have excellent Caucasian and Crimean wines, but that wine is not made in the Moscow district, where the climate is severe.

I saw dismay in his eyes, a struggle between two passions—for a beloved city and a beloved occupation. A moment passed, then he clapped me on the shoulder and said: "Never mind. Another two or three five-year plans, and you will have better wine in the Moscow district than we have in Julienat!"

This past summer, while on my way from Lyons to Paris, I decided to make a detour and visit my two old friends. The mother of Augias recognized me. "We saw in the papers that you were in France, and we were sure you would come to Julienat!"

I heard from her how Alphonse Baudry met his end. He was at the head of the Resistance movement in the district, and in the darkest days he used to assure the peasants: "Hang on for a year or two, and the Russians will come!"

The fascists tortured him. At the point of death he shouted: "The Russians will win! France will win! Liberty will win!"

Augias too was with the Partisans, and drew many more with him. Before the war there were seven Communists in Julienat. Three of them died. Now there are fifty-six Communists in the village, and Augias is deputy mayor.

THERE is much that is musty and stagnant in the life of the French intellectuals. For some snobs the center of the world is the Boulevard Saint-Germain, or to be exact, its two cafes. In the "Deux Magots" the now grey-headed Surrealists live out their days, while their rivals, the upstart "existentialists," frequent the "Cafe Flore" nearby.

The tables are thronged by literary hangers-on, girls who imagine the world will be startled by the sneer of Sartre, the sneeze of Breton, the kind eyes of Cocteau. But all this is an anachronism, a phantom, a grimace of the past.

The best representatives of thought have allied themselves with the builders of the new life, the working class. In their ranks are the noted scholars Langevin* and Joliot-Curie, the poets Aragon and Eluard, the artists Picasso, Matisse and Marquet. One may not agree with this or that about the work of one or the other, but it cannot be denied that these painters uphold the best traditions of French genius, and are innovators. They have understood that there is no living art outside throbbing life, and that throbbing life is created by vital people, a vital class.

Among the youth of bourgeois society, a youth spiritually old and doomed, the leader of the existentialists, Sartre, is the object of particular attachment. A clever, talented writer, he sees evil, but not its sources, and he does not know how this evil can be overcome. When Sartre describes the days of Munich or the nostalgia of the idlers he knows so well, he describes them faithfully and powerfully. When he begins to philosophize he seems an infant, or rather an old man in his dotage.

The best representatives of French art have come out to face life. If one compares with prewar literature the books of Aragon, Eluard, Emmanuel, Chamson and the young writers Gary and Vaillant, one sees how, without sacrificing depth and complexity, a profound art is becoming more organic, closer to the people.

I saw the canvases of Bonnard and Matisse, full of light, affirmative of life, and I cannot forget a series of "windows" done recently by the elderly Marquet, who is still young in spirit: a window opening on a garden, the sea and life; another window with closed green blinds, outside which one sensed the glory of the summer noonday.

There is much that is deformed in France — luxurious restaurants and pale shadows in the suburbs, three thousand ex-Partisans in prison, rascally newspapers, scandals, hopes of outside help, Voltaire's empty pedestal and beside it, like ravens, cassocks and cassocks. But France is getting on her feet, and reviving.

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* Paul Langevin, one of the world's great physicists, died recently.—ED.

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THE LAST DAY

"He'll take care of Betsy. Oh, aye! that he would indeed. No more hard work for the poor gel. She would be a lady, just as he had told her."

A Short Story by WILLIAM GLYNNE-JONES

Illustrated by Jean Bart.

"Sospan fach yn berwi ar y tan,
Ar gath wedi scrammo Johnny bach
. . . "[1]

BENJI came downstairs singing that morning, his cracked old voice hitting the low-roofed kitchen ceiling.

Betsy, his wife, smiled. She looked up from her task of packing his few cheese sandwiches into a tin dixie.

"You *are* happy this mornnig, Benji *bach*,"[2] she said affectionately, wiping her veined hands on her apron.

And why shouldn't he be, she thought. This was his last day at the mills. For forty-eight years he had worked in that inferno. Forty-eight years of hard labor, of sweat and toil. And now, at sixty, he was finishing—"retiring," as he preferred to call it. A little bit of money he had saved. Plans had been made. Benji and she were to rent a tiny bungalow on the Gower Coast, paradise of wind-swept moors and sheltered coves on the other side of the estuary.

Betsy closed her eyes and contemplated the new life that lay before them. It would be lovely to get away from the smoke and dust of Blaendy. To a life of ease and comfort, peace and tranquillity; to bask in the sun of a summer morning—resting in the big wicker chair she and Benji had fancied in Pugh the Furniture's window last time they were in town. She would put the chair on the green hill facing the sea and sit there quietly watching the seagulls wheeling around the cliff face, and listen to the soothing lullaby of the waves.

She would have two of those chairs, yes indeed—one for her and one for Benji. He could sit beside her smoking his pipe or reading his *Western Mail*. He'd be able to wear his carpet slippers every day. A white cricket shirt open at the neck he could have, too, and nice grey flannel trousers with creases.

How lovely, how lovely indeed it was going to be. No more getting up in the dark winter mornings when the frost silvered the roofs, or the wind curled under that crack in the kitchen door and howled like an *"ysbryd mewn poen"*[3] above the chimney pots. No more hanging Benji's "small shirt" and "sweat towel," wringing with perspiration, to dry on the wire line stretching across the fireplace. No more sandwiches to cut. No more——

"Happy, Betsy? Happy is not the word for the way I feel today."

Benji gently pinched his wife's arm, and reaching for his rumpled trousers thrown over the armchair, stepped gingerly into them, supporting himself against the mantlepiece.

He looked at the clock. It said five-thirty. Dawn had broken an hour ago and already the day was light and sunny.

"Well, Betsy," old Benji buttoned his braces and swilled himself under the cold water tap, "next week we'll be in our little place on the Gower. *Daro!*[4] that'll be grand, won't it? A proper lady and' gentleman we'll be."

"Indeed, Benji *bach*. Indeed we will," Betsy answered. "But come now, my boy, or late you'll be for the

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[1] "The tiny saucepan boils on the fire
And the cat has scratched little Johnny."
(Famous Welsh football song.)

[2] Little Benji (term of affection).

[3] Soul in torment.

[4] Exclamation of pleasure.

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first time in your life, and it's not that you're wanting on your last day, is it? Here you are, *y machgen i.*"[5]

She rolled up his "small shirt" and long white canvas apron and placed them beside the dixie.

Benji wriggled his stockinged feet into the heavy clogs that waited for him on the brass fender and tied a thick wad of folded newspapers across the insteps. He put on his coat, thrust the dixie into his pocket and reached for the tinworker's thirst quencher—a bottle of home-brewed ginger beer—that stood on the floor beside the gas stove.

"You take it easy today, my gel, for from now on you an' me's going to have a lazy life—see?" Benji patted Betsy's wrinkled cheek and, tucking the "small shirt" and apron under his arm, pulled on his peaked cap. He struggled with the bottle, forcing it into his other pocket.

"This afternoon, after I've finished my shift, we'll go to see Lewis the Garage for to make arrangements for the motorcar." He laughed, and rubbed his thin hands. "Fancy you an' me going down the Gower in a motorcar. Millionaires they'll be thinking we are, eh Betsy? Not once have you been in a car—that's right, isn't it, my gel?"

"Go on with you, Benji. Don't be talking such nonsense," Betsy replied. "Course I've been in a motorcar. Didn't I go to Oswald Pryce's funeral with you two years ago? But come! Off with you and your silly talk. Like a little boy who's going to the sands for a holiday, you are. Hurry, or you'll be late. See! it's a quarter to six."

"Goodness!" Benji clattered on to the stone close outside the kitchen.

"So long, gel. Look after yourself," he called. "And be ready for the trip this afternoon — first motorcar ride you've ever had, mind," he added, smilingly.

NEW DOCK ROAD swarmed with the hundreds of men, women and boys on their way to and from the tinworks.

Benji joined in with the crowd on the early morning shift. They walked briskly along, their clogs click-clacking on the pavement, small bundles of clothing under their arms, just like Benji.

The young boys and girls chatted noisily, swinging their tin food boxes. They seemed like creatures from some strange world in their coarse sack aprons, their hands bound with strips of red rubber tubing to protect them from the sharp edges of the tinplates they handled in the course of their work.

Avoiding the jostling crowd on the pavement, and shuffling like lifeless wooden images, came the workers off the night shift. These walked slowly along the roadway, their feet dragging on the hard surface. The aprons, white and crisp before the night shift began, were now scorched and soiled. "Sweat towels," limp as wet dishcloths, were thrown carelessly around the men's throats. Caps were slung back from their foreheads. Ginger beer bottles, empty, slewed from the open mouths of coat pockets.

Greetings were shouted from the men who were about to begin their day's shift to their companions trudging homeward.

"How did it go, Wil?"

"How many boxes did number one do, Jim?"

"Any hopes for a *spell mwgyn*[6] today?"

Benji turned the corner and marched with the crowd across the wooden footbridge leading over the dock entrance.

He almost bumped into Dai-Twenty-Pints, who swayed on his feet as he leaned over the bridge rail scanning the dirty yellow water that rushed through the sluice gates below.

"Hello, Dai. What are you waiting for?" Benji asked. "I thought you was on mornings?"

Dai blinked his eyes like a man who had been disturbed from sleep.

"'Allo, Benji. Not fit for work today, I am. Thick head and a swollen stomach I got. Think I'll go home."

Benji fingered the neck of a flagon bottle of beer protruding from Dai's pocket.

"Is it this?" he asked.

Dai nodded.

"Well, far better if you laid off the booze, Dai *bach*, and looked after yourself proper like. You can't go on like this forever, you know."

Dai mumbled under his breath. He caught Benji's hand.

"Only a few I had last night," he confessed. "Just six pints. And going home nice and tidy I was when I met Johnny Davies coming off the two-to-ten shift. He asked me over to the house to share a flagon, and," Dai closed his eyes and gripped the parapet for support, "from one flagon it went to two, and another one after for company. Then Johnny made me take this home," he tapped the empty bottle, "for good luck."

"*Ach,* why don't you give it up?" said Benji. "Honestly, Dai, I can't see any sense in making yourself ill like this. Last week you lost two turns, and it seems you'll have to miss another one today again. Besides, boy, look what it's doing to your health."

Dai shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of hoplessness. "You know what it's like in them mills, Benji—a thirst like nothing on earth it gives you. Many's the time I've promised Ruth I'd chuck up the beer, but what's the use? Can't pass a pub without wanting to go inside and scrape this throat o' mine. Wish to goodness I'd saved my money like you done, Benji. Then out of the mills I'd be by this time and living in a little place on the Gower same as you and Betsy's planning to do."

Benji said nothing. He felt sorry for Dai. He understood why he had taken to drink like so many other fine fellows who worked beside him in the mills. The heat was terrific. It sapped one's energy, drained every drop of perspiration from one's body, leaving the throat as dry as a board, the tongue cleaving to the roof of the mouth. A bottle of ginger beer lasted no time unless one was economical in its use. Water was dangerous to drink. It gave a man colic and left him writhing in agony. What else was there to do but call in for a glass of beer or two on the way home, or send a boy out to carry flagons from the pubs that thrived in the mean streets surrounding the tinworks?

But Benji was no sermonizer. He had avoided the temptation; but the fight had been hard and long. He considered himself in no position to condemn his fellow workers' lapses from sobriety. He had been more fortunate in his efforts to resist—that was all.

He patted Dai on the shoulder. "Go home, Dai," he said softly. "Have a good rest, then p'raps you'll feel better tomorrow."

HUGE hydraulic cranes thundered along the railways on the wharfside, unloading cargoes of pig iron and steel bars from the waiting vessels that tossed in the narrow channel. They swung their loads around, releasing

[5] My boy.

[6] A respite for a smoke.

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them with a deafening roar on the tail mounds of rusty scrap alongside the dock.

Groups of men bustled around like ants, shouting, cursing, singing at their work.

In the distance stood the tinworks, its forest of chimney stacks patterned against the sky. Columns of black smoke trailed over the estuary, and the low rumble of the rolling mills echoed faintly, alternating with the thunder of the hydraulic cranes.

Benji hurried over the sidings. He ducked under a row of stationary trucks and followed a narrow black path that zig-zagged across a stretch of wasteland bordering the tinworks. To his left, beyond the estuary, he could see the Gower headland with its yellow cornfields and tiny white houses nestling among the trees.

He halted. There, on the other side of the bay, was his new home-to-be. There, he and Betsy would live together for the days that were left to them. How grand it was going to be, he mused. Just lolling around, peaceful and quiet, with no thought of the tinworks to worry them again. He'd take good care of Betsy. Oh aye! that he would, indeed. No more hard work for the poor gel. She would be a lady, just as he had told her that morning—he'd see to that. All her life had been devoted to scrubbing floors, preparing his clothes for work, brewing ginger beer. The tinworks had claimed her body even as it had bound its chains around his.

But all that would be finished with, now. It was to be a closed chapter in their lives. And then, freedom—freedom to do what they liked, not bound by the clock to rise in the early mornings for the shift in the mills. From now on they would have a lazy life. . . . Well, not exactly lazy. One couldn't truthfully say they'd enjoy that. Maybe he'd keep a few chickens. He could build a run for them in the field facing the bungalow. And perhaps he'd have a pig or two, same as his father and mother had years ago. It would be nice to see a couple of sides of bacon hanging from the hooks in the ceiling just as in the old days when he was a boy.

Yes, that would be grand, indeed. Just he and Betsy, the chickens and the two pigs.

The rumble of the mills grew louder. Through the dilapidated sliding door at the pine end Benji saw the massive flywheel turning, one-half almost touching the zinc-sheeted roof, the other disappearing into the pit beneath the mill floor. The interior of the mill was dark and gloomy, the dinginess unrelieved by the arc lamps suspended from the roof.

Clouds of steam hissed angrily into the stifling air as the millmen threw their long-handled tongs into the water boshes to cool. The ever-spinning rolls shone like silver, gleaming through a thick haze of smoke and steam. Now and then a millman daubed the necks of the rolls with a long wire swab of black grease which crackled and spat, the grayish-black fumes shooting to the roof.

The building resounded to the constant clatter of clogged feet and the heavy thumping of red-hot steel plates thrown across the floor from furnaceman to waiting rollerman.

Brass bearings jolted as the plates were pushed between the rolls, and the loud strident voices of the girls sorting the finished sheets echoed above the noise, adding to the confusion of sounds.

BENJI entered the mill. Near the entrance stood the shear, a raised steel table with a sharp edged arm that moved unceasingly up and down, cutting away the surplus waste from the rolled sheets.

Richard Lewis, the shearer, greeted Benji with a smile, his hands skillfully manipulating the sheets under the shear blade.

"Last day, eh Benji? Lucky feller you are, indeed," he commented. "But you won't be by yourselves for long, old chap. Next year, missus and me's

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having a little place in the Gower."

Benji returned his greeting and stepped across to the wooden shanty behind No. 1 furnace. He took off his coat, shirt and vest, and unrolled his bundle.

"Last day for you too, *crys bach*,"[7] he murmured, slipping on the sleeveless "small shirt" that hung loosely about him. He tied the canvas apron around his waist, and throwing the "sweat towel" over his shoulder, took up his position to the right of the furnace.

Evan Jenkins, the rollerman; Dai Banjo, the behinder; and Luther Rhys, the furnaceman, grinned at one another.

"Well, Benji, is there a celebration to be after this shift is over? You know—a farewell party?" asked Luther, winking at his mates. "Always a farewell party there is when a man goes away somewhere. And seeing as you and Betsy's travelling to the Gower, we thought that p'raps—"

"Get on with you, Luther," said Benji, good-naturedly. "I know what *you* mean by a party. But if it's a drink you're all after, well you'll be having one on me—after this turn is over though, and not before, mind you."

"Good!" exclaimed Dai Banjo, drawing a hand across his mouth, "though Evan, here," he nodded to the rollerman, "and me's expecting a couple o' pints. After all, we've put up with you for twenty years, day in, day out—and that's worth something, isn't it?"

Benji laughed. "I'll give you a drink, don't you worry. But let's get on with some work first. I'm in a hurry to finish. This afternoon Betsy an' me's off to make arrangements with Lewis the Garage."

"Oh, oh—a motorcar, is it . . .?" Dai began.

"You carry on with your work, Dai, there's a good boy," Benji thrust in. "I don't want to stay here a minute longer than I can help."

"O.K., boys. Let's go!" Luther pulled the furnace-door lever. Shielding his face with his forearm as the door rose, he reached into the white hot interior, grasped a plate with his tongs and hurled it across the floor to Evan, the rollerman.

The plate was pushed between the rolls, Dai, the behinder, drawing it out with his tongs and passing it back again above the top roll to Evan.

[7] Small shirt.

In and out between the rolls the sheet was pushed and pulled, extending in length with each process.

Then, gripping it firmly, Evan swung the long, thinned sheet across the floor to Benji. With conscious ease, Benji placed his left foot on the edge of the sheet, and with tongs outstretched, pulled the far edge toward him. He raised his right foot and brought it sharply down, clamping the edges together, then gripping the curved sheet with his tongs he lifted it on to a low, steel table and held it beneath the jaws of a mechanical press.

The sheet was pressed into a single unit and then slung back once more across the floor to the furnaceman for further treatment in the fire.

The heat was intense. Perspiration oozed from the men's faces. Their eyes were red-rimmed, their hollow cheeks scorched by the glare from the furnace. They worked swiftly as a team, deftly handling the heavy plates as though they weighed but a few ounces. Every movement was timed. Their bodies glowed in the dim light. The muscles of their arms and stomachs were tensed.

"Just one more heat—and then the party," Dai shouted, leaning on his tongs for a brief respite. "Don't forget, Benji . . . and let me tell you, it's dry as a cork I am."

"You shut your gab, Dai, or it's only a bottle of pop I'll be buying you, and then . . ."

"Here she comes, Benji!"

Evan, the rollerman, flicked the sheet along the floor. Benji gripped it expertly with his tongs and repeated the doubling process.

"*Iechyd!*"[8] he gasped as he swung it back along the floor to the furnaceman, "to think this is my last day, Luther. Pretty lucky I am, eh?"

"Indeed, you are," Luther returned as he lifted the doubled sheet into the jaws of the furnace. "Very lucky." He drew a hand across his glistening forehead. "Wisht this was the last time I had to come to this bloody hole."

"Your time'll come, Lu," Evan grinned. "Another twenty years—that's all."

"Ay, not long if you say it quickly," old Richard, the shearer, thrust in.

"Twenty years! Hell of a long time," Luther muttered. "In *Cae Jacky's*[9] cemetery I'll be by then. Not so careful as old Benji am I. Beer and skittles — that's where my money's gone. No bungalow for me if I'm alive. Just the same address, number three Tinworks Row."

The group suddenly became silent. But each was conscious of Luther's

[8] Exclamation in Welsh.

[9] Jacky's field.

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position. Like Dai-Twenty-Pints he had never given a thought to the years when his brain and body would no longer synchronize with the whirling machinery of the mills. Drink had claimed him, too.

"You'll be coming over to see me an' Betsy, eh boys?" Old Benji broke the silence.

"You bet," said Evan. "And a bit o' that bacon fried I'll be wanting for my breakfast."

"Breakfast!" Dai Banjo leaned on his tongs and frowned. "Think you're going to be a lodger, or what? Benji's going for a rest, not for to run a hotel."

Benji laughed. "You'll have a bit o' bacon, all right, don't you worry. And a chicken for to take home, too, if you like."

THE morning passed. Benji worked assiduously; but his movements were careful and studied. His teammates watched him, and as they glanced knowingly at one another their eyes seemed to say: "The old man's making sure he goes out of here all in one piece. No slip-ups for him today. No risk of the dreaded "doubler's cut" which happened to so many when the curved sheet snapped back, tearing into flesh and bone of leg to render a man helpless for the rest of his life. Good old Benji! Good luck to the poor old chap! A happy, happy life to him and his Betsy!"

The two o'clock hooter blew. Benji slowly unfastened his canvas apron and rolled it into a bundle. "Well, boys . . ." he began.

His mates smiled at the old man.

"Good luck, old chap."

"Happy days, Benji *bach.*"

"And don't forget that bit o' bacon, mind!"

"Nor the couple of pints you promised."

Benji shook each warmly by the hand. "I'll not be forgetting you boys, never," he said softly. "No, never. Quite welcome you are to our little home . . ."

He paused and turned his head away. A tear glistened on his cheek. Through the smoke and steam of the mills, beyond the estuary in the distance, he saw the Gower headland shining clear and bright, and white-breasted waves racing eagerly, proudly to the shore.

"So lovely it will be to have you all there . . . so lovely . . ."

FLASHBACKS AND COMING ATTRACTIONS

Hollywood's postwar production is viewed in retrospect. What is the outlook for this year?

By JOSEPH FOSTER

ALONG with holly and the New Year kermess, this is the season when movie commentators, observers, historians, statisticians, and a few critics clutch and chew their pencil stubs as they draw up lists of the departed year's ten best films. This time the chore has been tougher than usual, for in this period of post-war adjustment American films have reached the lowest level since the first year of the talkies, when producers were too enamored of the wonder of sound to think of anything else. Choosing ten or even five from among the 1946 films is reminiscent, as one man put it, of the committee of crabs who met to select the most graceful crab of the village. For the first time that I can recall, a critic of the New York *Times* had to go to the foreign films (no less than five) to round out his list, and among his domestic choices were a couple that normally would not get beyond the annual parent-teacher children's list.

The unusually offensive quality of last year's movies comes as no surprise. The shadow was cast soon after V-J Day, when spokesmen for the film industry announced that people were tired of war pictures, and of all pictures that made them think. Having passed through the horrors of

"And wasn't Laura Larue truly dimensional in Fourteen Men in Her Life?"

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bombing and human furnaces, people wanted only to be entertained, to be put to sleep with soft dreams and happy music. Producers believe they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams; that is to say, they think that audiences love them for such foresight and concern. Harry Warner, president of Warner Brothers, has triumphantly announced that the net profits of his company are greater than ever before, a just reward for his humanitarian film program. But even a quick look at the figures prove that people adore these movies a little less than they would have us believe, for the profits represent not greater attendance but jacked-up box-office prices ranging from thirty to forty percent over the previous year. The attendance figures, says Mr. Warner, were "comparable to" other years, which means "less than"—otherwise no such euphemism would be used.

The sharp contrast in quality between the current film crop and the films of the war years is not due to a change in Hollywood heart, as many are prone to believe. Within earshot of the Pacific littoral one can still hear the mutter of words that sound like "social realism." But the phrase is a wartime hangover, as are the ringing phrases of democracy that issue from the Johnston Office. This time the objectives and definitions are different. During the war democracy meant defeat of Germany and Japan, and social realism in films meant anything that would help advance this aim. Since the interests of American monopoly capital demanded this defeat, there was a confluence of purposes with those of the people.

Hollywood, along with other organs of capitalist propaganda, reflected this aspect of the war, and we had a whole string of films in which unions, Negroes, Chinese, Russians, anti-fascists, and sometimes even Communists (though never American ones) were on the side of the angels. The struggles for an emancipated existence were often approached from an adult point of view, even if not always given adult treatment. Of course, the most reactionary capitalists, those who disagreed with the method of solving the international problem, raised plenty of highjinks and even called for an investigation of Hollywood, but the influence of the mighty who wanted to see German capitalist competition knocked off, aided by the enthusiasm of the win-the-war forces, easily put them down. So unique was this situation that many a progressive was dazzled by it. The golden era was held to be close at hand; the movie millenium was upon us. This vast propaganda mill, this all-embracing, all-ingratiating medium was henceforth to operate for the benefit of the common stiff. But if the liberals and progressives associated with film-making were taken in by this circumstance, the Hollywood brass was not. From the moment of the studio strike last year, they let the world know where they really stood. For there is no dichotomy between the treatment of labor and the treatment of labor themes, between democracy for the pickets and democracy in drama. Roosevelt is dead, and, they assume, the New Deal with him. The tear-gas bomb and the cop's truncheon have once again assumed their normal place in American cultural life.

Thus the Republicanism of election day was anticipated well in advance by the Chase National Bank and other financial masters of Hollywood. In fact, by keeping the screen carefully free from such issues as might remind the people of the benefits of the New Deal or of victory over the fascists, the political program of the Republicans was helped considerably. Realism for Hollywood has once again come to mean the realism of the escape film, the peaceful undisturbed patterns of the wage-slave world.

Scoop up a handful of 1946 movies at random and you will dirty your hand with *Stork Club, Sailor Takes a Wife, Johnny Angel, Kitty, Mr. Ace, Sentimental Journey, Bad Bascomb, Well Groomed Bride, The Bride Wore Boots, My Pal Trigger, The Thrill of Brazil, Scandal in Paris, So Goes My Life, Angel On My Shoulder, OSS, Cloak and Dagger, Gilda, Cinderella Jones* and similar titles numbering into the thousands. I have seen dozens of them and have written about some of them, but I can't, at this moment, recall what a good many of them are about.

It is argued that, as people get the government they deserve, so do they get the films they deserve. Movies, they say, reflect public taste. This argument is as false as a set of beauty parlor eyelashes. It is somewhat true, of course, that any issue

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

News Item: "Wall Street Journal" relates sad tale of corporation head who has trouble getting along on $45,000 a year.

Forty-five thousand dollars may sound like a lot of money but these days it's a mere drop in the champagne bucket. These cases, selected from among those in the higher income rackets, are most desperately in need. All are people with a lot of upper crust. We appeal to our readers to help put them out of their misery.

Case No. 106

Mr. X is president of a corporation beset by union demands and taxes. Profits are only slightly above wartime peaks. Mrs. X is in need of either a Palm Springs vacation or a new mink coat. His debutante daughter threatens to become a night club singer unless her coming out party is the social event of the season. Amount needed: $78,765.20.

Case No. 107

Mrs. Z appeals on behalf of her bank director husband who is suffering from the gout and cirrhosis of the liver. The couple has practically been reduced to living on stock and bond dividends. Her husband suffered a relapse recently when the CIO proposed a new round of wage increases. Mrs. Z urgently needs $10,500 to pay the premium on her beloved husband's life insurance policy.

●

Bilbo is said to have some "inside dope" on other Senators. He might have collected it along with his fee for that narcotics permit.

●

President Truman has proclaimed the end of hostilities. However, the GOP has yet to issue a proclamation on Truman's surrender.

●

The NAM claims that a family of four can get along on $43.23 a week. Of course they'd have to forget this CIO nonsense about eating.

●

The House Un-American Activities Committee is planning to investigate the faculties of several universities. Somebody evidently told them that the professors were well read.

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that agitates a majority of the people sufficiently and over a long enough period of time *may* become a box-office consideration, but public taste, no less than the minds of the people who argue thus, is constantly bombarded not only by the movies, but by the press and radio as well. In the absence of strong counter influences, this taste becomes systematically corrupted. It is absurd to claim that the public deserves this—a moral reward for its defenselessness. But this point need not be argued too much here. The fact is, the content of the pictures of 1946 was no accident. They were meant to fashion specific attitudes in people toward the world and its problems.

How do Hollywood producers accomplish this? Not by lists of specifics enumerating what they do want, but rather by creating an atmosphere which clearly indicates what is not wanted. Thus it would be impossible, or nearly so, for a writer today to do an *Ox-Bow Incident*, or a *Russian Story*, or a *Pride of the Marines*, or an *Action in the North Atlantic* or even a *Joe Smith, American*. The "atmosphere" is not conducive. Hollywood is more than a blind child of the box-office. Within the limits of vulgarity, ignorance, aborted history and distortion of realism, films are as controlled as a *Times* or a Hearst editorial.

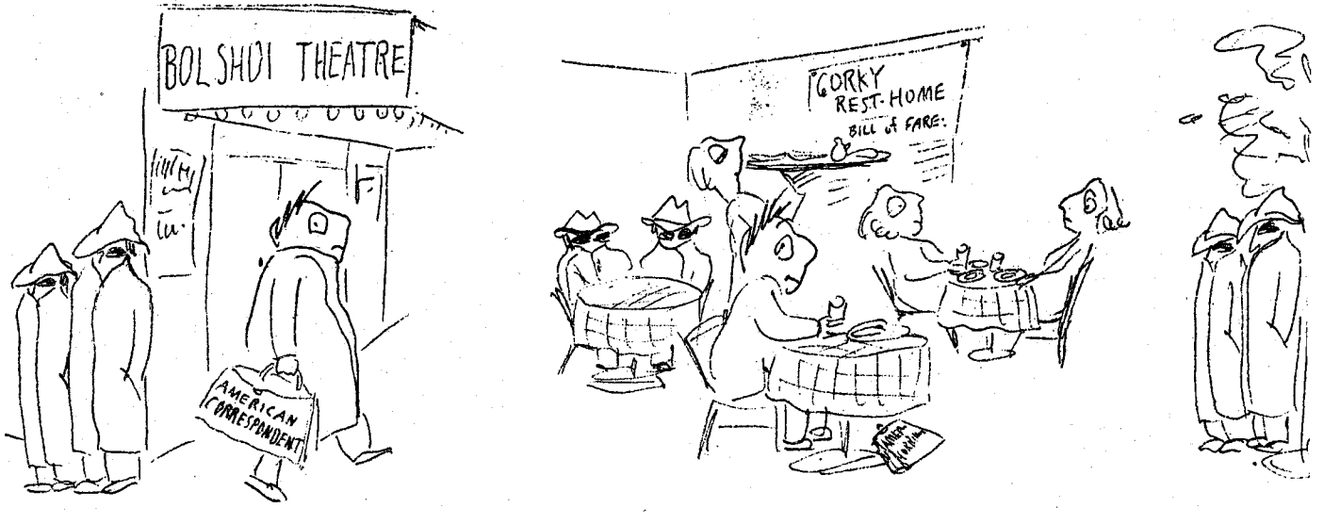
There are several effective instruments of control. In addition to the primary domination of the financiers and their obedient producers, we have the powerful influence of the Catholic hierarchy, both within and without the industry. Many prominent lay Catholics occupy key positions among the producers, but the hierarchy's aims are achieved mainly through the Motion Picture Production Code Administration and the Catholic Legion of Decency.

It would necessitate a long article to show how the Catholic Church came into such a position of importance, but suffice it to say in connection with the evaluation of last year's films that the Production Code, with its myriad thou-shalt-nots, was formulated by Martin Quigley, editor of film trade publications, lay member of the New York Archdiocese and a tireless busybody behind the Hollywood scene; and by Daniel J. Lord, a Jesuit priest. The code, which determines the political and moral tone of *all* Hollywood films that aim at national distribution, was carefully drawn up by and is administered under instructions issued by papal emissaries and through papal encyclicals. When the first code administrator was found unsatisfactory, a prominent Catholic, Joseph Breen, was put into the job, at the suggestion of Quigley. A pressure group organized by the Council of American Bishops and known as the Legion of Decency sees to it that films do not stray too far from the ordained path. Thus even in the relatively freer atmosphere of the New Deal every progressive film—particularly those made independently or by foreign studios, from the *Birth of a Baby* to *Carnival in Flanders* — got rough treatment from hierarchic agencies. How much easier it is for the Code Administrator and his friends on the outside to operate in the present repressive atmosphere!

A third group whose activities makes for low-grade films are the exhibitors. Though you get an occasional protest from this group, as in the case of the Minneapolis exhibitor who objected to *Abie's Irish Rose*, in the main the exhibitors see eye to eye with the producers. In many cases they have the major say-so (Loew's, Inc., owns the producing company of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer). Often they fight to maintain regional prejudices. In the South the exhibitors frequently take the lead in agitating against films that show Negroes in a favorable light. In certain Far Western states a parallel feeling against the American Indian or Mexican exists, since in these areas Mexicans and Indians are the exploited groups. Least influential of all are the state censorship boards and the license commissioners of various cities, but they contribute their bit to the echelons of reaction.

It is a tough job to break through the combined influences of these groups who represent either directly or indirectly the political and social ideas of reactionary capitalism, in the saddle again after a thirteen-year drought. Thus in 1946, instead of the science of a Pasteur or an Ehrlich we get the laying on of hands as practiced by Clark Gable in the birthing scene of *Adventure*. Instead of *Make Way for Tomorrow*, with its sensitive treatment of the problems of the unwanted old, we get *Three Wise Fools*, wherein unprincipled skullduggery, an accurate reflection of ethics among American businessmen, is treated as exhuberant boys-will-be-boys comedy. Instead of *Mission To Moscow, Seventh Cross, Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, The Southerner, How Green Was My Valley, Song To Remember,*

THE IRON CURTAIN



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Dragon Seed (though some of these were far from masterpieces), the past year has given us such think-pieces as *Razor's Edge, To Each His Own, Too Young To Know, My Reputation, Stolen Life* and the like. They have provided for our entertainment and relaxation films arguing that women's place is in the home (*Without Reservation*), that following progressive political leaders leads people to intellectual enslavement (*Spectre and the Rose*), that crime and murder lead to a questionable future (*Scarlet Street, Three Strangers, Blue Dahlia, My Darling Clementine*, etc.), that this is the best of all possible worlds and only a knave or a fool ever questions the fact (*At Suzy Slagel's*, all the musicals, all the musical biographies celebrating our song and dance heroes in the mold of the fabulous success story such as the *Jolson Story, Blue Skies, Night and Day* and *Till the Clouds Roll By*).

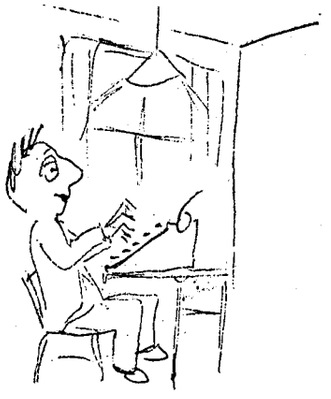
With few exceptions most films fall into one or more of the familiar categories. You can substitute your own titles for the ones set down here, without altering a single point. But there is still one more group of films that I have not touched on. I refer to films of violence. These are generally as escapist as the films of romance. They are as removed from normal living as the dreams of the factory worker are from the Park Avenue penthouse. Both types of film induce dreams by day and furious activity by night. Juvenile delinquents of both sexes are helped set aprowl by the movies, the girls in quest of romance, the boys after easy money, to help the romance along. Like the films that preach the moral life, the films of violence (*Big Sleep, Her Kind of Man, The Killers, Deadline at Dawn*) are too much with us, and yet, not with us enough. That there are moral defections, theft, robbery, arson, mayhem and murder is not the point. These are merely symptoms of the social diseases of capitalism. Hollywood films scold and shout and make a great pother over the existence of thieves, double-crossers, blackmailers, rapists and murderers, without once uncovering the social factors that breed them. To make a continuous din about them is to avoid the real problem of how to get rid of them.

JUDGING by the titles of films forthcoming in the first six months of 1947, this year will be scarcely distinguishable from last. These titles include *Song of Love, The Birds and the Bees, Black Gold, Violence, Magic Town, Variety Girl, Three Were Thoroughbreds, Road to Rio, Lady From Shanghai, Bulldog Drummond at Bay, To Kiss and To Keep, Border Feud, The Beginning and the End*, a film on the atomic bomb, ad infinitum. These films were made during 1946, and the films for 1948 will be made next year. It is a continuous process that doesn't stop for a smoke on New Year's Day. While critics draw up lists for the ten best of this or that period, the producers are undisturbed by such games. Hollywood can be influenced to a measurable degree by the organized pressure of audience groups and by progressive action of the unions within the industry. Such pressure is imperative. But even more effective action can be achieved through the creation of mass cultural organs.

The movie expression of the mass cultural organ is the 16mm film. This point has been raised before, but it cannot be made too often. The sooner we have a flourishing 16mm movement, the sooner will we get motion pictures that are made for understanding and not for intellectual somnolence. It is a sad thing to admit, but the organizations most capable of starting such an activity are still in Rip Van Winkle land.

The trade unions, with their millions of organized members, are in a position to deal Hollywood a blow from which it would never recover; but so far they have only reached the stage of improved pamphlet distribution. It took a bit of doing to substitute the attractive pamphlet with fine illustrations and well-designed type arrangement for the old-fashioned leaflet that resembled the printed directions of a patent medicine. The union money-dispensers felt that the old way was cheaper, but now they have learned that such reasoning is penny wise and pound foolish. All of this means that we have gotten off the rutty back road and onto the paved highway. But we are still walking. So long as the opposition utilizes methods that reach millions, workers' organizations must do the same. This holds true, as well, for the newly-organized conferences of progressives, Win-the-Peace bodies, fraternal organizations. After many years, progressive groups have finally come to look upon the radio as a must in its regular methods of work. We will have to develop the same attitude toward the movie medium if we are going to make a fight of it for 1948 and after.

by Frank Russell



. . . . Shrouded figures dog my footsteps.

Editor, New York Times-Journal:
You were right, chief. We found that he visits drama festivals, housing projects, rest-homes. He should certainly be taken off the Moscow beat. . . .

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BEHOLD THE LAND!

Southern youth is called to a great crusade for the emancipation of mankind, black and white.

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

The following address was delivered at the closing session of the Southern Youth Legislature recently held in Columbia, S. C. More than 800 Negro and white delegates attended the conference, which was sponsored by the Southern Negro Youth Congress.

Dr. Du Bois, distinguished scholar, author and, for more than half a century, a fighter for Negro rights and human freedom, was born seventy-eight years ago in Great Barrington, Mass. A contributing editor of NEW MASSES, *Dr. Du Bois is director of the Department of Special Research of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.*

THE future of American Negroes is in the South. Here, 327 years ago, they began to enter what is now the United States of America; here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. I trust then that an organization like yours is going to regard the South as the battleground of a great crusade. Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker and the dreamer. This is the firing line not simply for the emancipation of the American Negro but for the emancipation of the African Negro and the Negroes of the West Indies; for the emancipation of the colored races, and for the emancipation of the white slaves of modern capitalistic monopoly.

Remember here, too, that you do not stand alone. It may seem like a failing fight when the newspapers ignore you; when every effort is made by white people in the South to count you out of citizenship and to act as though you did not exist as human beings while all the time they are profiting by your labor, gleaning wealth from your sacrifices and trying to build a nation and a civilization upon your degradation. You must remember that despite all this, you have allies and allies even in the white South. First and greatest of these possible allies are the white working classes about you, the poor whites whom you have been taught to despise and who in turn have learned to fear and hate you. This must not deter you from efforts to make them understand, because in the past in their ignorance and suffering they have been led foolishly to look upon you as the cause of most of their distress. You must remember that this attitude is hereditary from slavery and that it has been deliberately cultivated ever since emancipation.

Slowly but surely the working people of the South, white and black, must come to remember that their emancipation depends upon their mutual cooperation, upon their acquaintanceship with each other, upon their friendship, upon their social intermingling. Unless this happens each is going to be made the football to break the heads and hearts of the other.

White youth in the South is peculiarly frustrated. There is not a single great ideal which they can express or aspire to that does not bring them into flat contradiction with the Negro problem. The more they try to escape it, the more they land into hypocrisy, lying and double-dealing; the more they become what they least wish to become, the oppressors and despisers of human beings. Some of them, in larger and larger numbers, are bound to turn toward the truth and to recognize you as brothers and sisters, as fellow travellers toward the dawn.

There has always been in the South the intellectual elite who saw the Negro problem clearly. They have always lacked and some still lack the courage to stand up for what they know is right. Nevertheless they can be depended on in the long run to follow their own clear thinking and their own decent choice. Finally even the politicians must eventually recognize the trend in the world, in this country, and in the South. James Byrnes, that favorite son of this commonwealth, and Secretary of State of the United States, is today occupying an indefensible and impossible position; and if he survives in the memory of men, he must begin to help establish in his own South Carolina something of that democracy which he has been recently so loudly preaching to Russia. He is the end of a long series of men whose eternal damnation is the fact that they looked *truth* in the face and did not see it; John C. Calhoun, Wade Hampton, Ben Tillman are men whose names must ever be besmirched by the fact that they fought against freedom and democracy in a land which was founded upon democracy and freedom.

Eventually this class of men must yield to the writing in the stars. That great hypocrite, Jan Smuts, who today is talking of humanity and standing beside Byrnes for a United Nations, is at the same time oppressing the black people of Africa to an extent which makes their two countries, South Africa and the Southern South, the most reactionary peoples on earth. Peoples whose exploitation of the poor and helpless reaches the last degree of shame. They must in the long run yield to the forward march of civilization or die.

IF NOW you young people, instead of running away from the battle here in Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, instead of seeking freedom and opportunity in Chicago and New York—which do spell opportunity—nevertheless grit your teeth and make up your minds to fight it out right here if it takes every day of your lives and the lives of your children's children; if you do this, you must in meetings like this ask yourselves, what does the fight mean? How can it be carried on? What are the best tools, arms and methods? And where does it lead?

I should be the last to insist that the

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uplift of mankind never calls for force and death. There are times, as both you and I know, when

Tho' love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die.

At the same time and even more clearly in a day like this, after the millions of mass murders that have been done in the world since 1914, we ought to be the last to believe that force is ever the final word. We cannot escape the clear fact that what is going to win in this world is reason if this ever becomes a reasonable world. The careful reasoning of the human mind backed by the facts of science is the one salvation of man. The world, if it resumes its march toward civilization, cannot ignore reason. This has been the tragedy of the South in the past; it is still its awful and unforgivable sin that it has set its face against reason and against the fact. It tried to build slavery upon freedom; it tried to build tyranny upon democracy; it tried to build mob violence on law and law on lynching and in all that despicable endeavor, the state of South Carolina has led the South for a century. It began not the Civil War—not the War between the States—but the War to Preserve Slavery; it began mob violence and lynching and today it stands in the front rank of those defying the Supreme Court on disfranchisement.

Nevertheless reason can and will prevail; but of course it can only prevail with publicity—pitiless, blatant publicity. You have got to make the people of the United States and of the world know what is going on in the South. You have got to use every field of publicity to force the truth into their ears, and before their eyes. You have got to make it impossible for any human being to live in the South and not realize the barbarities that prevail here. You may be condemned for flamboyant methods; for calling a congress like this; for waving your grievances under the noses and in the faces of men. That makes no difference; it is your duty to do it. It is your duty to do more of this sort of thing than you have done in the past. As a result of this you are going to be called upon for sacrifice. It is no easy thing for a young black man or a young black woman to live in the South today and to plan to continue to live here; to marry and raise children; to establish a home. They are in the midst of legal caste and customary insults; they are in continuous danger of mob violence; they are mistreated by the officers of the law and they have no hearing before the courts and the churches and public opinion commensurate with the attention which they ought to receive. But that sacrifice is only the beginning of battle; you must rebuild this South.

44th Street Gallery.

"Hope for the Future," lithograph by Charles White.

There are enormous opportunities here for a new nation, a new economy, a new culture in a South really new and not a mere renewal of an old South of slavery, monopoly and race hate. There is a chance for a new cooperative agriculture on renewed land owned by the state with capital furnished by the state, mechanized and coordinated with city life. There is chance for strong, virile trade unions without race discrimination, with high wages, closed shop and decent conditions of work, to beat back and hold in check the swarm of landlords, monopolists and profiteers who are today sucking the blood out of this land. There is chance for cooperative industry, built on the cheap power of TVA and its future extensions. There is opportunity to organize and mechanize domestic service with decent hours, high wages and dignified training.

There is a vast field for consumers' cooperation, building business on public service and not on private profit as the mainspring of industry. There is chance for a broad, sunny, healthy home life, shorn of the fear of mobs and liquor, and rescued from lying, stealing politicians, who build their deviltry on race prejudice.

Here in this South is the gateway to

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the colored millions of the West Indies, Central and South America. Here is the straight path to Africa, the Indies, China and the South Seas. Here is the path to the greater, freer, truer world. It would be shame and cowardice to surrender this glorious land and its opportunities for civilization and humanity to the thugs and lynchers, the mobs and profiteers, the monopolists and gamblers who today choke its soul and steal its resources. The oil and sulphur; the coal and iron; the cotton and corn; the lumber and cattle belong to you the workers, black and white, and not to the thieves who hold them and use them to enslave you. They can be rescued and restored to the people if you have the guts to strive for the real right to vote, the right to real education, the right to happiness and health and the total abolition of the father of these scourges of mankind, *poverty*.

"BEHOLD the beautiful land which the Lord thy God hath given thee." Behold the land, the rich and resourceful land, from which for a hundred years its best elements have been running away, its youth and hope, black and white, scurrying North because they are afraid of each other, and dare not face a future of equal, independent, upstanding human beings, in a real and not a sham democracy.

To rescue this land, in this way, calls for the *Great Sacrifice;* this is the thing that you are called upon to do because it is the right thing to do. Because you are embarked upon a great and holy crusade, the emancipation of mankind black and white; the upbuilding of democracy; the breaking down, particularly here in the South, of forces of evil represented by race prejudice in South Carolina; by lynching in Georgia; by disfranchisement in Mississippi; by ignorance in Louisiana and by all these and monopoly of wealth in the whole South.

There could be no more splendid vocation beckoning to the youth of the twentieth century, after the flat failures of white civilization, after the flamboyant establishment of an industrial system which creates poverty and the children of poverty, which are ignorance and disease and crime; after the crazy boasting of a white culture that finally ended in wars which ruined civilization in the whole world; in the midst of allied peoples who have yelled about democracy and never practiced it either in the British Empire or in the American Commonwealth or in South Carolina.

Here is the chance for young women and young men of devotion to lift again the banner of humanity and to walk toward a civilization which will be free and intelligent; which will be healthy and unafraid; and build in the world a culture led by black folk and joined by peoples of all colors and all races—without poverty, ignorance and disease!

Once a great German poet cried "*Selig der den Er in Sieges Glanze findet.*" ("Happy man whom Death shall find in Victory's splendor.")

But I know a happier one: he who fights in despair and in defeat still fights. Singing with Arna Bontemps the quiet, determined philosophy of undefeatable men:

I thought I saw an angel flying low,
I thought I saw the flicker of a wing
Above the mulberry trees; but not again,
Bethesda sleeps. This ancient pool that healed
A Host of bearded Jews does not awake.
This pool that once the angels troubled does not move.
No angel stirs it now, no Saviour comes
With healing in His hands to raise the sick
and bid the lame man leap upon the ground.

The golden days are gone. Why do we wait
So long upon the marble steps, blood
Falling from our open wounds? and why
Do our black faces search the empty sky?
Is there something we have forgotten? Some precious thing
We have lost, wandering in strange lands?

There was a day, I remember now,
I beat my breast and cried, "Wash me God,"
Wash me with a wave of wind upon
The barley; O quiet one, draw near, draw near!
Walk upon the hills with lovely feet
And in the waterfall stand and speak!

THE SEEKERS

Pueblo, Colorado, 1940.

Our grandfathers were strangers and their absurd notions
Said uncle to a century that built few fences;
Pragmatists, with six-guns, their dreams were never fancy;
Beyond their mustaches, their eyes eloped with nations.
Their caravans set wagon tongues at a peculiar star;
Led at last to mountains, they sought to map Fidelity—
Went loco in windy canyons, but, lost, they looked harder and harder.

Our fathers, more complex and less heroic,
Were haunted by more ghosts than an empty house.
Their joy was to thumb their hearts over. Masked like Freud
They entered their subconscious by the second story.
But what they were seeking, or how it looked or sounded,
We heard about only once in a blue moon,
Though they expected to know it if they ever found it.

Every direction has its attendant devil,
And their safaris weren't conducted on the bosses' time,
For what they were hunting is certainly never tame
And, for the poor, is usually illegal.
Maybe with maps made going would be faster,
But the maps made for tourists in their private cars
Have no names for brotherhood or justice, and in any case
We'll have to walk because we're going farther.

THOMAS MCGRATH.

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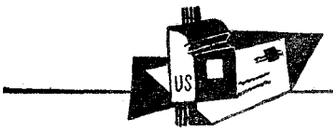
mail call



Motion Carried!

To New Masses: There is talk, spasmodic and vague, of women's equal rights. Since the right to vote has been achieved, further methods have been discovered and started to help liberate women from domestic slavery.

In the American Marxist press there has been a noticeable lack of discussion, of specific information on nurseries, on women's political organizations, of the progress and setbacks of "equal pay for equal work." If such information is available, could New Masses start a series of articles on the subject? This would certainly be a source of great enlightenment and as such it would act as an incentive to further organize in all possible ways towards freeing American women from their household chains.

Without the knowledge of "what" and "how" the women's movement stagnates. Please—some info!

Elyne Langerman.

Chicago.

The criticism and suggestion are definitely in order. NM *can and will be of service in promoting such a discussion and providing the necessary information. We are now preparing such a series of articles which will appear soon in* NM.—The Editors.

Looking Forward

To New Masses: I have just read Thomas McGrath's piece on Huxley's *Brave New World*. I have always found this book so irritating that I have never succeeded in reading it through. Yet, so many of my friends have discussed it with me that I feel I know its contents quite well. Clearly, it is a significant book and I am glad NM has given it the attention it deserves.

Huxley poses this important question: in what direction is mankind moving (by inference: in what direction should it *not* move)? While people are mainly concerned with the problems of everyday living and with immediate political issues this important question is not absent from their thoughts. A correct answer to it can illuminate many of the immediate issues.

I believe we Marxists should give more attention in our press to the sort of society we are aiming at. We take too much for granted in this respect. And I am not simply referring to socialism as it now exists in the Soviet Union but to the more distant stage of social development known to us as communism. In this light it is not enough that McGrath analyses *Brave New World* and the reason for the sort of thinking embodied in it. He should also use such a discussion as a springboard for a presentation of Marxist views on the general shape of the society of the future. For that matter, the whole subject can be exploited as a means of placing the issue of socialism before a great number of people.

I realize that Marxists are extremely hesitant to attempt any detailed description of the communist society of the future. And rightly so—there is no sense in repeating the errors of the old utopians. But the general features of this society are known and should be more publicized. Hardly a day goes by that bourgeois ideologists are not giving us *their* ideas on communism (under communism the individual is simply grist to the collective mill, cultural values are reduced to the lowest common denominator, etc., etc.). This means we have continually to reassert our ideas on the subject and counteract these distortions.

I would like to see even more discussion on *Brave New World*.

Charles Arnault.

Los Angeles.

Same Play?

To New Masses: Quoting from the December 17 issue of NM in an article "Ideas in the Theater" by Harry Taylor:

"George Kelly does not trouble himself about the broad subject of man's soul but contrives a pale, witless comedy about an absurdly romantic woman without for a moment considering the psychological chemistry of bourgeois escapism."

From the same issue in a review by Isidor Schneider:

"*The Fatal Weakness*, George Kelly's comedy about marriage, is keenly written, exquisitely produced and brilliantly performed, particularly by Ina Claire, who displayed what seemed to be the most flavorous acting I have seen this year. The play contrasts the preposterous romanticism about marriage of an older generation with the equally preposterous worldliness that is a contemporary fashion. The contrast strikes off some telling sparks of insight and wit, though it does not cut to any depth."

Is it possible that they are talking about the same play? Not having seen the play in question, I am unable to judge which critic is right or whether they are both wrong. Is this a case of the three blind men and the elephant or is the divergence of opinion further proof that we need a real exploration into the nature of Marxist criticism and the establishment of values? Too many of our critics of the Left spin off words from the top of their heads with the glibness of the usual reviewer. Certainly "a pale, witless comedy" is a far cry from "keenly written . . . telling sparks of insight and wit . . ." Both Isidore Schneider and Harry Taylor are men of integrity and intelligence but this little crack of difference may be an indication of a much more profound gap in our critical thinking.

Lewis Allan.

New York.

One Man's View

To New Masses: There is one literary fetish which I think should be deflated here and now—the role of the "little literary magazine." In the present [December 31] issue, Mr. Fred Witwer, reviewing *The Best American Short Stories of 1946*, writes, "The real 'little' mags played an important role in American literature; they were the only outlet for the truly creative writer. . . ." To which let me add—"Like hell!"

First off, name one writer who was ever "discovered" by a little mag. Hemingway, etc., were made by their books, and not by their stories in the little mags. It's true their stories in a literary magazine may have caused publishers to write those innocuous notes, "Are you working on a novel . . . we'd like to see it," etc., etc. But a publisher is willing to look at a novel anytime, whether you have been published or not. The fact is, ninety-nine percent of the little magazines contained stupid, dull yarns, without any meaning. And ninety-nine percent of the editors of these magazines were (and are) either intellectual snobs, who look upon the magazines as a hobby, or would-be intellectuals happy suddenly to call themselves "editors." In actual practice, they have not the slightest editorial values or standards, and their magazines become insipid mirrors of the *Ladies Home Journal*. As a matter of record, the slicks have "discovered" as many real writers, and printed as many "good" stories, as the little magazines—and everybody knows the slicks are a mess of hooey and old-fashioned conventions; I certainly am not defending them.

Writers must realize that the only literary freedom they can enjoy is in the book-length piece—and if Hearst and the rest of the reactionary press have their way, even the books will become as straight-laced as the magazines. (And certainly there's room for improvement in the book field—but at least a writer can say *most* of what he has on his mind.) So let's stop all this worship of the "little magazines"—the pitiful old maids of literature. Okay, *Anvil* and one or two others were trying to be literature, but the vast majority of the little magazines looked (and look) like a bad high-school composition book!

J. Edgar Hemingway.

New York.

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OF BOURGEOIS BONDAGE

The inner life of the Samsa family reveals a ghastly picture of slavery and parasitism.

By S. FINKELSTEIN

METAMORPHOSIS, *by Franz Kafka. Vanguard. $2.75.*

KAFKA'S *Metamorphosis* is offered to the public like a rare gem in a pretentious setting. Hardly longer than a short story, it occupies a full volume with heavy paper, wide margins, large print, and an introduction by Paul Goodman imposing in its incomprehensibility. There are full-page illustrations and decorations by Leslie Sherman, which unfortunately illustrate Goodman's preface rather than Kafka's text. This display is an indication of the cult that has grown up around Kafka.

There are many kinds of difficulties of understanding to be found in the arts today. Some are largely due to language problems. More of the world is culturally alive than at any time in history. The many varied national and social backgrounds, bringing into the arts a different kind of imagery and language, often cause works that are essentially clear to be somewhat difficult for the unprepared audience. But there is also a stream of art whose difficulties cut deeper, and are part of the aesthetic of the works themselves. To this stream Kafka belongs. The difficulties of comprehension come from the fact that the author no longer accepts our customary basis for meanings. Meaning in art is not a matter of word definition, but of human relationships. The common ground we share with an artist is the society of which we both are a part, and our conviction that it has an order which we can understand and master. When an artist denies the presence of logic or order in the world, looking upon it as an incomprehensible chaos, he loses the basis for such logic or meaning in his art. His art becomes therefore incomprehensible at its core, capable of many interpretations, any one of which has as much validity as any other, for such interpretations are reactions and inventions of the reader.

Such cloudiness of meaning in art has a history. It appears in the full-blown, individualist and anti-social romanticism of the latter nineteenth century. Wagner and Dostievsky already reveal an ambiguity which has made their work subject to countless contradictory interpretations. It is possible, in the case of these two artists, to separate misleading interpretations from more accurate ones. But in the generations following, ambiguity was accepted by romanticist artists as a necessary part of their art. The artist divorced himself from society and set down only what his "purified" consciousness dictated. What his symbols meant to him he wasn't sure, and what they meant to others was not his concern at all. This art prided itself on its exaltation of man's individuality, and on the purity of his consciousness undisturbed by conventional patterns of thought or by the search for social meanings. Its basic theory, and tragic mistake, is the belief that consciousness is something apart from and untouched, except to its harm, by the world. The truth is the opposite. Consciousness is made by the world, and grows with its understanding. Any rejection of the search for logic and understanding of the world, in turn, has its effect upon the consciousness, making it far more subject to the pulls of the immediate sensation and impulse. These become exalted as the only realities, incomprehensible because the come from mysterious sources. The a tist, turning down the light of reaso becomes terrified like a child at the r sulting darkness. Thus critical inte pretations of his work tend inevitabl to become biographical, psychologic and psychiatric.

Within such art there has also ap peared much moving and inspired writ ing. These artists, exalting their tor tured individualism, are often the in heritors of the finest and most studie traditions of naturalistic art, which ap peared first with the healthy assertio of the rights of the individual and hi discovery of the world as somethin he could change. It would be wron to say that the vagueness of genera meaning at the core of their worl makes all their work humbug. A grea deal of humbug has been spilled abou such art by self-appointed disciples an expositors of the masters, who use it evocative power, combined with it personal and secretive atmosphere, t help give any nonsense they themselve may put together the slick appearance of art. Typical of such humbug i Goodman's preface to the present volume. But the masters themselves, such as Kafka, are a different matter.

Kafka is a rarely fine artist. Incomprehensibility lies at the core of his art, for the center of his thinking is the problem which arises not out of the world, but out of its negation: the mystery beyond death. For Kafka such matters cannot be explained. They can only be stated as mysteries, along with the bewilderment and terror they arouse in the writer. Kafka's power lies in two directions. First, better than any writer of our times, he can communicate this terror to the reader, this nightmarish feeling that the world is unreal, and the only reality is the mystery. Throughout all his work there is a sense of horror with overtones of ironic laughter, as if life were a joke played upon mankind. Second, and more important, he can present with fine sensitivity the real experiences which led him to the negation of life, so that starting on the basis of his own art, we can also stand outside of him and see the true patterns of the society he is negating. About his core of mystery, there are layers of valuable meanings.

Professor Edwin Berry Burgum, in an essay on Kafka,* traced the relation of Kafka's pessimism to the fail-

* *Accent Anthology*. Harcourt, Brace.

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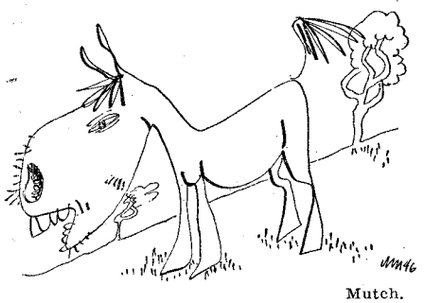
ire of the Weimar Republic in Germany. He was careful to point out that no such conscious symbolism was intended by Kafka. With this limitation understood, the connection is clear. Kafka's special characters are of the petty middle class, which suffered severely in the years of the republic, with millions of people bereft of ordinary human decencies. Nowhere in Kafka, to my knowledge, is there any inkling of the forces which made for this disaster; the Social-Democrats who shot down the workers, the bankers who stimulated inflation, the industrialists who cut down production to increase unemployment and make a mockery of social legislation. But we can find in Kafka a picture of what happened to the middle-class family, with its obsessive fear of poverty, its struggle to preserve respectability, its frantic search for the few coins that meant the preservation of appearances, its subjection to the tyrannical officialdom both of the hypocritical government and of industry. *Metamorphosis* is such a picture of horror in the lower-middle-class family.

THE story tells of Gregor Samsa, a young travelling salesman who wakes up one morning to find that he has turned into a cockroach the size of a human being, still able to think and hear as a human being. His family, of which he was the main support, is filled with fear and horror. Determined to keep this disaster a secret, they keep him locked up in a room, and care for him with growing distaste. Finally he dies, partly from the embittered attacks of his father, partly from his own self-willed starvation.

This outline, of course, gives no inkling of the powers of the story itself. It is Kafka's art that once he lays down his basic fantasy, everything that follows is told in the most realistic fashion. Such intensely naturalistic technique is the basis of most of this late romanticist art; *viz.* Dali's meticulously-painted melted watches. The combination of irrational thinking with intensely realistic and documented detail is the secret of its power over the minds of audiences. Nobody has mastered this style better than Kafka. The words and sentences are in themselves simple and clear, but because of the fantastic rearrangement of reality, the most familiar phrases strike the mind strangely.



Mutch.

The events that follow in the Samsa family, and the thoughts that develop in Gregor's mind, are described with magical detail. The inner life of the Samsa family is unfolded, a ghastly picture of slavery and parasitism. There is first of all the slavery to money. The scene in which the manager of Samsa's firm comes to find out why he isn't working and to threaten him unless he returns, short as it is, is most revealing of the perversions of human nature wrought by and upon petty officials who, fearing their superiors, themselves whip those beneath them. Along with the slavery to the job and to those who, in a world haunted by unemployment, dole out the meager jobs, there is the slavery to debt, for it becomes clear that the Samsa debts have forced Gregor to give up his hopes for freedom. It is then revealed that the parents have helped enslave the son and even deceived him; they had more resources than they allowed him to know, and were parasitically living on him. Finally the course of the story reveals the manner in which the affection that Gregor's family felt for him turns into hatred as he changes from an asset into a burden, so that even his sister, who loved him most, begins to wish him dead.

As in all of Kafka's writing, the style of this story is packed with subtle psychological perceptions which are more apparent upon a second and third reading. Certainly Kafka himself did not intend this story only as a picture of the "deprivations which the world imposes upon poor people," or as a basic criticism of the middle-class world from the point of view of a historical and realistic mind aware of the forces of change. It is his limitation that he accepted the meanness and frustration he saw as part of the order of things, only lamenting their presence, driven by them into a haunting sense of the transitory nature of all of life. It is his great strength as an artist that he revealed the life he saw and his reactions to it without hokum, which is more than can be said of the dealers in intellectual obscurity who have made Kafka one of their prophets.

Art portrays the diseases of humanity as well as its health. Often it does not explain these diseases in their full social origins. But so long as it is honest, it can be a basis for diagnosis. The trouble rises when self-appointed prophets and parasites proclaim that disease is the only life fit for humanity. Kafka wrote of, and shared, the disease of isolation, but he never propagandized for it, or turned the isolation into hatred of humanity. This lack his present glorifiers are trying to remedy.

Germans in Defeat

EUROPEAN WITNESS, *by Stephen Spender. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $3.

MR. SPENDER went to Germany twice between July and October, 1945, on an official mission "to enquire into the lives and ideas of German intellectuals . . . and into the conditions of libraries." He kept a journal during his stay and this book is the result of his notes at the time. In form it is a rambling, discursive series of diary entries, liberally intermixed with reflections upon the philosophic roots of fascism and the crisis in modern writing.

When Mr. Spender turns to reflecting upon the causes of the rise of the Nazis and seeks a salvation for the future he is not very interesting and not very profound. The book is marred, for instance, by a tortured theory of the differences between Russian and Western democracy, which, in Mr. Spender's view, is simply in "the amounts of terror employed by the central governing authority." This sort of thing and a good deal of general and rather confused talk about freedom and what it means is scattered throughout the book. But *European Witness* should be read because it throws a revealing light upon the German people after defeat. In his passionless and restrained style, Mr. Spender has placed on record simply and I believe with integrity what the intellectuals he met in Germany said.

He discovered a number of people who surprised him: the British Military Government officer who thought an active anti-Nazi policy would be "taking sides." The woman librarian who knew just how to clear the public library of Nazi books: she simply took them off the shelves and locked them up, she said, just as she had done with

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the Jewish books when Hitler came to power; for her there was no appreciable difference between the two operations. The numerous people who "couldn't understand" how the inhumanities of Belsen and Dachau could have come about, and simply left it at that.

Spender himself, if one may judge by his book, left Germany confused and unhappy in exactly the way that many of the intellectuals in Europe today are confused and unhappy—they understand neither what has happened in the world these last years nor what is now required of them to prevent its recurrence. Spender has seen these lost and unrepentant German intellectuals burrowing about helplessly in their desert of ruins. Among them he met a few liberals and Catholics who felt deeply enough the guilt of the German people and who turned to religion, to the Anglo-Americans or to that essentially German conception of abstract "culture" to solve Germany's mammoth problems. Having spoken with those who could excuse Nazi brutality but not Nazi failure, and with the others who had been genuine anti-Nazis in their limited way throughout, Spender, not surprisingly, comes away puzzled and downcast. And his own tentative proposals for the regeneration of Germany are just as vague and unconvincing as those of the people he met.

All this is hardly surprising, for anyone who seeks to explain Nazism primarily as a disease of the soul and its cure as a process based in the main upon education and cultural revival is necessarily seeing not the whole picture but only a very small part of it indeed. It was not part of Spender's job in Germany to examine the economic roots of Nazism nor its political aspects. For this very good reason he does not deal with these questions in the book. But where he fails is in attempting, having put the very substance of Nazism out of his mind, to assess its origins and its cure. The erroneous impression he inevitably conveys is that the democratization of Germany is primarily the concern of a number of liberal-minded mayors, librarians and directors of education who are still confused in their objectives and overwhelmed by their difficulties.

This book also tells a good deal about the difficulties of the occupation. It demonstrates in striking fashion how deep the Nazi poison has gone; and it is interesting, particularly, for its revelation of the effects of the modern European problem upon the mind of Spender himself. Mr. Spender is typical of many sensitive and able writers in Europe today who know in a vague way that the old order is finished, who accept and approve that fact, who reject the discipline of organized political action, and who for that reason are utterly puzzled and unhappy at their inability to fit into the surging forward movement that has developed out of the defeat of Nazi Germany. Spender was in Spain and was at that time a Communist. Since then things have become complicated for him. Discipline has become unacceptable. He has become concerned, he declares, over the question of personal freedom. He feels freer to write as an individual. But it is revealing that in his effort to retain his necessary personal integrity as an artist he has reached a point where he writes unhappily, tentatively and with frustration. It is the writers who have wholeheartedly associated themselves with the movement in Europe, and by Spender's standards sacrificed their liberty of expression, who in the main are now writing with the vigor and confidence and clarity which is so lacking in the work of Spender and his friends. Aragon and Eluard in France are writing poetry with more of the future in it than is to be found in Spender's poetry in England.

A nihilist student named Aulach whom he met in Germany told him: "I have noticed in your poems which you showed me that you sometimes write simply of the experience of being alive and of your own intimate experience of yourself as an individual isolated within the universe. When you write in this way you are filled with social despair, and you have no religious and political beliefs whatever. Directly, out of a sense of conscience, you try to introduce a constructive idea into your writing, you fail."

It is interesting that Spender does not record that he disagrees with this view.

DEREK KARTUN.

Dawson's Dilemma

BRIGHT DAY, *by J. B. Priestley. Harper. $2.50.*

For this day, or any day, there is scarcely a more vital theme than the conscious search of a man for social values to live by. And this is the theme of J. B. Priestley's latest novel, notwithstanding the intricacies of plot which surround and threaten at times to smother it. Unfortunately, the author does little more than shadow-box with his subject, leaving the reader with a "happy ending" and a profound dissatisfaction.

It is not insignificant that *Bright Day*, although its action takes place in Great Britain after World War II, is conspicuously silent about the many pressing problems which the British people face, though Priestley's wartime novels effectively captured the spirit and the political maturing of the rank and file Briton during that period.

In *Bright Day*, to outline briefly, a successful British screenwriter is working on his latest script, with a personal message to the public to "expect nothing from such a world as this but the worst." It is this futile alternative to the inanities and choking commercialism of the movies which constitutes his "revolt" against the world as the novel opens.

Fed up with his career, the fifty-year-old bachelor Gregory Dawson also rejects the values of pre-war England after an intensive mental journey into his past which takes up the bulk of the novel, and ends by joining an earnest group of film workers determined to produce cooperatively motion pictures which are vaguely projected as adult and worthwhile.

If the conclusion of *Bright Day* is disappointing, it is obviously not so per se. Rather it is because the author, after preparing the way for a major battle, dishes up a quick skirmish and easy victory instead.

Dawson's conflict is fought out not in terms of 1945 but in his remembrance of things past and people known on the eve of World War I when, as a youth of eighteen, he worked in a wool house in the town of Bruddersford. Here are the three lovely Alington sisters, daughters of Gregory's employer, playing chamber music and charades, all unconscious of impending disaster. Mr. Alington, losing his wool firm branch to a skilled financial manipulator, symbolizes the classic retreat of the small enterpriser before the superior power of the money combines. Only Labor Councillor Fred Knott, of all young Gregory's circle in this middle-class calm, understands the seething social and economic forces which are to blow this British Cherry Orchard to bits.

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But Knott's views are only stated and static, hanging as a slender thread to give substance to the hero's decision, as the book ends, to work with craftsman interested in the films they produce rather than for entrepreneurs concerned wholly with profit. Priestley's failure to relate Dawson's action to his attitudes and to the much broader contemporary problems which would be likely to motivate him makes

Stefanelli.

the conclusion of *Bright Day* less meaningful. This is, I feel, not a captious criticism of an author who, after all, deliberately chose a theme hardly separable from the main political and social currents of our day.

As is usual with Priestley, the intricacies of plot in *Bright Day* unfold with skill. Dawson, whether as frustrated fifty or groping eighteen, is sensitively and sympathetically drawn. It is more the pity then that the author did not see fit to deal with the real problems which give validity and substance to the dilemma common to Gregory Dawson and his contemporaries. ROBERT FRIEDMAN.

American Saga

A STAR POINTED NORTH, *by Edmund Fuller. Harper.* $2.75.

THE story of Frederick Douglass—his life, his work, his struggle, his achievement—is one of the truly great epics of America. To say that and to say that he is still denied his proper place in our country's history, that his name is only to be found as a footnote in our textbooks (when it is mentioned at all), that his story is not the pride of every American, is not simply a paradox. It is a monument to the Big Lie: white supremacy, Negro inferiority. This very silence itself is a thunderous indictment of the racist shame imposed upon our country by its ruling class. Douglass was the "tribune of his people," the Negro people; but he also ranks with Lincoln in the democratic tradition which is the common heritage of all Americans.

Douglas himself told the story of his life in three separate autobiographies,* two of which were published before the Civil War and were effective weapons in the struggle against slavery. Edmund Fuller has retold the story as an historical novel in *A Star Pointed North.*

Closely following the chronicled life of Douglass, Mr. Fuller recounts the drama-filled years which began on a Maryland plantation with a slave boy known as Fred Bailey. It is an exciting and inspiring tale which to some may seem incredible—yet it is true. For those who today see the oppression of the Negro people as "an American dilemma" this story has little meaning. And yet for Fred, born a slave, orphaned at an early age, beaten, kicked, starved and worked as an animal in the field, there was no dilemma. There was only freedom—freedom to be fought for and to be won at any price, at all cost, even of life itself.

If there was Covey, the brutal slave-breaker, with his lash—there was the power in his own young body and spirit to resist and to declare: I will not allow myself to be beaten again. If an escape, planned together with his fellow-slaves, was foiled—it meant try again, more resolutely, more carefully, more surely. If ignorance and illiteracy were a link in the chain of enslavement—then knowledge and letters must be won, painfully, secretly, but won. And then to follow the star northward in a flight to freedom and to a great destiny.

Mr. Fuller traces the years during which Fred Bailey, renamed Douglass in freedom, entered the Abolitionist movement and emerged a leader among leaders with Garrison, Phillips, Brown and the others. Lecturer, editor, statesman, his eloquence and fire were matched by a political understanding which was not equalled by his contemporaries in the movement which was to smash the grip of the slaveocracy.

But in telling of Douglass' differences with the white Abolitionist leaders, it seems to me that Mr. Fuller tends to detract from the latter's stature and to slight their role as an indispensable part of the vanguard struggle. It is also unfortunate that Mr. Fuller chose to introduce a fictional, extra-marital love into his hero's life. He creates a Julia Griffiths, an English woman sympathizer, who comes to America, takes over virtual managership of his affairs and falls in love with him in the process. And he with her. Perhaps it was the author's intention to add a bit more conflict to Douglass' stormy life. Whatever his intention, however, the result is that Douglass is reduced (during this episode) to a bewildered follower of the energetic Julia. She takes over direction of his newspaper in Rochester ("brandished a pencil over all he wrote") and even his home, with his wife and four children, "was vitally affected under Julia's dynamic sway."

Fortunately for Mr. Fuller's Douglass, who here bears no resemblance to

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* *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* Boston, 1845; *My Bondage and My Freedom,* New York, 1855; and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass,* Hartford, 1881.

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any person living or dead, Julia finally goes back where she came from. What further makes this incident distasteful is that fact that there was a real Julia W. Griffiths, a member of the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester, who was of great assistance in helping Douglass finance his paper, *The North Star*.

But Mr. Fuller tells his story well and his book may serve to reach a wider audience with the saga of the man who said: "Under the skin we are all the same and every one of us must join in the fight to further human brotherhood."

LLOYD L. BROWN.

Russian Painting

THE ART OF RUSSIA, *by Helen Rubissow. Philosophical Library. $6.*

RUSSIA'S attainments in music and literature, during the two and a half centuries since she turned toward the West in the reign of Peter the Great, are much better known to the rest of the world than her attainments in painting. Helen Rubissow's book, with its 160 full-page illustrations, introduced by a brief historical essay, is the first comprehensive study to be published.

It is interesting to compare the record of Russian painting in the Western style (to which Miss Rubissow's book is almost entirely devoted, for its coverage of the earlier icon painting in the Byzantine tradition is very brief) with that of American painting, which it parallels so closely in time. In both countries the starting point was the neo-classical portraiture of the eighteenth century; and in both neo-classicism was succeeded as a dominant trend, early in the nineteenth century, by romanticism; and romanticism, in turn, by realism. The masterpieces of the mid-nineteenth century realistic school of Russian genre painters are remarkably comparable to much American painting of the same period and purpose. The Russians particularly seem to have attained a kind of skill in the literal representation of realistic detail scarcely excelled, if rivalled, by the painters of any other country. Although the Russian painters, like the American, responded during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to subsequent influences from abroad—impressionism, expressionism, cubism and even futurism—the decline of the realistic trend seems to have been accompanied by a decline in the sense of genuine assurance which appears in the work of its chief representatives. The later work, like so much American painting of the same period appears increasingly derivative and unsure.

During the last quarter-century however, one is much more impressed by differences than by similarities. Whereas American painting has shown an ever-growing confusion of contradictory trends, the painters of the Soviet Union, having broken away from a brief period of formal experimentation, seem to have united around the basic approach known as "social realism." Although Miss Rubissow offers no explanation of why or how this came to be the basic approach, a perceptive reader may perhaps find a partial explanation in the very dominance of realism throughout the last century as the fundamental trend in the native tradition. The reader who has some conception of the nature of Soviet society will also, of course, find in its unity of social purpose an explanation of the cohesiveness in basic attitude of Soviet artists.

More than six centuries of art history are perhaps too much for any single volume to cover adequately; and thus it may be unfair to reproach Miss Rubissow for her failure to provide a more detailed treatment of contemporary Soviet art, of which one forms an impression only a little less fragmentary than the impression one forms of pre-eighteenth century art in Russia. The choice of works for reproduction seems hit-or-miss, to say the least; certainly it reveals a lack of any well-formed taste. One wonders, for instance, why Alexander Deineka, certainly one of the most notable Soviet artists, is represented by a single plate, while the very inferior and decidedly sentimental pre-Soviet painter Vaznetsov is represented by three. On the other hand, the inclusion of three examples by A. Samokhovalov—whose work is an exciting indication of unsuspected riches in Soviet art—only whets one's curiosity.

It seems unfortunate also that the introductory essay is so slipshod, consisting of not much more than a series of names, dated and labelled; that the reproductions could not have been done in a better process than halftone; and that dates of the works reproduced were not included, for their helpfulness in better understanding historical

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ends. What Miss Rubissow's book oes achieve is the incitement of active terest; and one can only hope it will ot long remain the only book in its eld.

WALTER MCELROY.

lot

ITY IN THE SUN, *by Karon Kehoe. Dodd, lead.* $2.50.

'N THIS first novel of unusual integ- rity and sensitivity, Karon Kehoe as produced a work not only satisfy- ng in its own right as fiction, but f major documentary importance. Awarded a Dodd, Mead Intercolle- iate Fellowship, *City in the Sun* tells he story of what happened to an American family during the war. It is nore than that, however, for it also lescribes with remarkable vividness one of the most shameful pages in Ameri- an history.

The Matsuki family of Pasadena, California, are not ordinary Ameri- ans. Their eyes are "slanted," their kin brown. And this, of course, was far more important than patriotism or oyalty to the callous military adminis- ration assigned to their supervision. During the days of hysteria following Pearl Harbor and long after the first panic of war had subsided, Japanese-Americans were subjected to a system of brutality and injustice of which any fascist might have been proud. The entire story of our relocation program has never received the publicity of other war undertakings. It has for the most part been kept secret, or when dis- closed, never presented as anything but a necessary war measure. It is only now with the war ended that the truth is slowly being revealed.

Katsuji Matsuki, his wife Tsuyo and their adolescent son Coke live a re- spectable, lower-middle class existence. They have their own home, bought in Coke's name because there are laws in California prohibiting "Orientals" not of American citizenship from owning property. Their ideals, aspirations and incentives are no different from those of any other American family in a similar economic position. Yet a few days after Pearl Harbor, Katsuji is detained for examination by the FBI, and his home is looted. Finally on E-Day—Evacuation Day—Tsuyo and Coke are sent to an assembly center at a racetrack, from which, after weeks of waiting, they are transferred to Maricopa, a permanent evacuee camp

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in the Arizona desert, their lives at the disposal of the impersonal machine of the War Relocation Authority.

The endless pattern of heat-laden days and nights of the relocation center saps what vitality and hope these Japanese-Americans had. After almost a year of separation, Katsuji is reunited with his family, only to find them, like all the other families in camp, demoralized and Coke surrendering to boredom and futility, well on his way to becoming a juvenile delinquent, resentful of all authority.

Both Tsuyo and Coke are well-drawn, living characters, but Katsuji and most of the minor characters in the book are not quite real. Too many of the white personnel at Maricopa, the "Caucasians," have been selected as types, and as such lose some effectiveness. In only one of these, Dr. Arnold, the professional "weeper" for the plight of the masses who, for all her concern, knows nothing of the masses or their problems, does Miss Kehoe create a devastatingly sharp portrait.

Yet at no time is *City in the Sun* merely a surface study. Karon Kehoe is aware of the economic interests which played so large a part in banishing the Japanese-Americans from their homes and fruitful farms and businesses. It is only in her failure to indicate that this minority group might find added strength by uniting and working with other minority groups that the novel seems incomplete. Her people are individualists to the core, yet they can never achieve full acceptance by remaining individualists. One has the feeling that Miss Kehoe realizes this fact, yet she does not suggest any possible path for them.

There is a minimum of emotion in the writing itself. It is forthright, deliberately underwritten, competent and at times quite powerful, building up its overwhelming effect of horror and injustice point by point as in a case history.

City in the Sun is an indictment of a society and government which out of hate, selfishness and hysteria was responsible for a forced mass migration for which there was no possible excuse. It is reminiscent of the treatment accorded the Indian and will stand as evidence that America's handling of minority groups is far from consistent with our constitution or democratic traditions.

CHARLES DWOSKIN.

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sights and sounds

WALL STREET MIT UNS

"Temper the Wind": the late unpleasantness over, German cartelists take up where they left off.

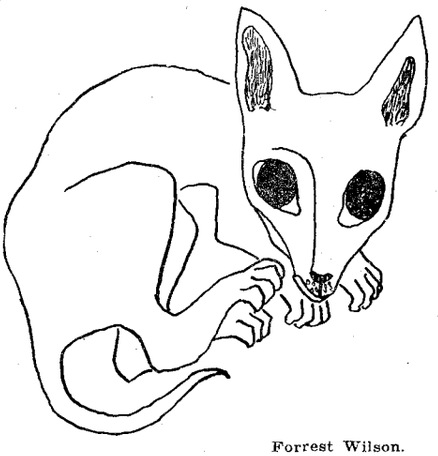
By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

THAT the theater can be used for vital information and commentary was demonstrated, once again, in *Temper the Wind*, Edward Mabley and Leonard Mins' play about the AMG administration of a German industrial town in the American occupation zone.

Temper the Wind returns generalizations about the war-making cartels to one of their sources in a specific German machine-tool plant and an American industrialist's potential ten percent interest; it gives human embodiments to generalizations about the common anti-Soviet attitudes and interests of German and American businessmen; and it shows the alliance of big business and the underworld that constituted fascism in the murderous present reality of an incited riot aimed at convincing the American authorities that the German industrialist had better be left to run things as before with his plant un-denazified. It gives human illustrations, on the stage, of other truths usually vapored away in abstractions. The audience that has seen *Temper the Wind* will have a better knowledge of the realities of the occupation and denazification of Germany.

The action of the play turns upon the arrival in Bavarian Reitenberg of Colonel Woodruff, on an inspection tour. Woodruff has been identified by the factory owner, Hugo Benckendorff, as a classmate of his dead son and a not too humiliatingly rejected suitor of his daughter. Benckendorff hunts up and dusts off a portrait of his son, publicly unlamented by the Benckendorff family till now, who had died at the hands of the Nazis. As a still more practical measure for softening up Woodruff, Benckendorff instructs his daughter to be nice to Woodruff, to refuse no dates with him. It had been Papa Benckendorff who had forbidden her marriage to Woodruff and installed the Nazi, Erich Jaeger, as her husband. But, with a flow of soft, persistent, flattering patter, he now covers it all up.

Through Woodruff, "tenderized" by the knowledge of his classmate's martyrdom, and made still more malleable by the warmth of a revived romance, Benckendorff expects to wangle priorities on materials necessary for him to get his plant in full operation within the month. That is all-important to him, important enough to compromise his daughter, if necessary; for within the month there is to be an international industrialists' meeting in London that will take up the suspended agenda of the carteleers and redivide the world market. If Benckendorff is in full production by then, his American ten percent interested friend can put in a bid for their cut in the market.



Forrest Wilson.

Woodruff, however, turns out to be one of those "hot-headed," "impractical," "visionary," "unrealistic," etc., fools who holds to principles; who doesn't trust peacemaking to the "practical" men whose "realism" has cost humanity two world wars. The thwarted Benckendorff then turns to the visiting American manufacturer, Bruce, to help him get around Woodruff through more "reasonable" higher-ups in the AMG headquarters. When that fails to move Woodruff, Benckendorff turns to his Nazi son-in-law to manufacture "unrest" at a public meeting that will prove to Woodruff's superiors that Woodruff is impractical and his policy causes trouble.

The Nazis prove to be over-enthusiastic; there is a little more murder than had been planned, with an American GI among the dead; and the "trouble" that Benckendorff had planned strictly for others reaches into his own house.

Yet this setback to Benckendorff is not made to seem decisive; the audience is not left too easily comforted with a simple solution. It remains perfectly clear that Woodruff's victory is temporary and insecure; and he and his kind will need vigilant and forceful help to make such victories stick.

I understand that *Temper the Wind* was written more than a year ago, when there could still be some hopeful doubt about the course of American policy. Since then the doubts have vanished and the course has become clear. It is the course of Bruce, not of Woodruff, for the Bruces are in command in the administration. This is something which the play, conceived in an earlier period, does not make clear. Yet for me, at least, social commentary on the stage has not often been so forceful.

As dramatic writing, *The Wind* hits no heights. Its climaxes are scattered and the narrative line sometimes sags between them. In the case of Benckendorff and his American counterpart, Bruce (very well played by Reinhold Schunzel and Walter Greaza), the characterization is excellent because it is founded on solid personal and class interest. But in the case of Woodruff (too stiffly played by Thomas Beck), and the daughter, Elizabeth (played by Vilma Kurer as if she were completely confused by the role), the motivation has no source in personal experience or interest; they can only be

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referred to abstractions and remain abstractions. The structural faults of the play are most clearly exposed by the entirely unintegrated role of the Prussian Countess (beautifully played by Blanche Yurka) who, though written in for a lead role, has little more function than that of commentator, a Greek chorus at best.

Yet, despite these shortcomings, *Temper the Wind* is one of the few important plays to reach Broadway.

FILMS

"THE STONE FLOWER" (Stanley), which won first prize for its color qualities at the Cannes International film festival last year, might just as easily have been awarded a prize for charm. It is a captivating fairy story dealing with nobles in fine houses and the impoverished artisans who do their bidding. The aristocrats are cruel and selfish and exploit the stonecutters until they die of overwork or premature decrepitude. We find the same elements in many of the Western fairy tales, except that a magic wand usually brings an end to the miseries of the poor. What makes this story so enjoyable, apart from the charm of its own technical accomplishments, is the fact that all its people belong truly to a past long divorced from reality. It thus creates a genuine feeling of legend.

Mainly it deals with a youthful, handsome stonecutter's quest for beauty. Like the fabulous hero of the Golden Fleece, he dreams of attaining the earthly symbol of beauty and perfection, which in this instance is a stone flower. According to stories spun by the gaffers of the village, only the Lady of the Copper Mountain can lead him to it. In due time he meets, follows and is enchanted by her. But in the end, unswayed by her offer of unplumbed riches, he breaks her spell to find his real love, the girl he left behind.

Thus even this simple, artless tale has its proper moral, and makes more point than many a Hollywood fairy-tale that claims to be realistic. The color is fresh and natural, although the long shots tend to blur somewhat. Changes from color to color have the same magical properties of the early Disney color exercises. This quality, together with the acting, provide suitable concomitants for the story.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

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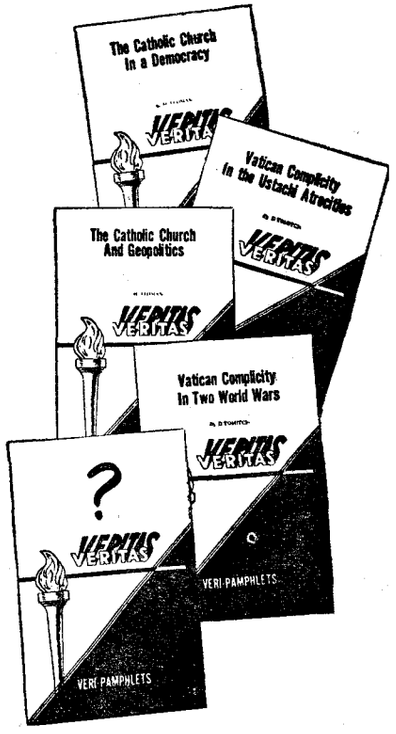
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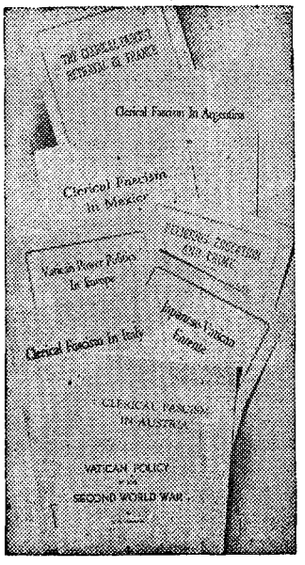
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